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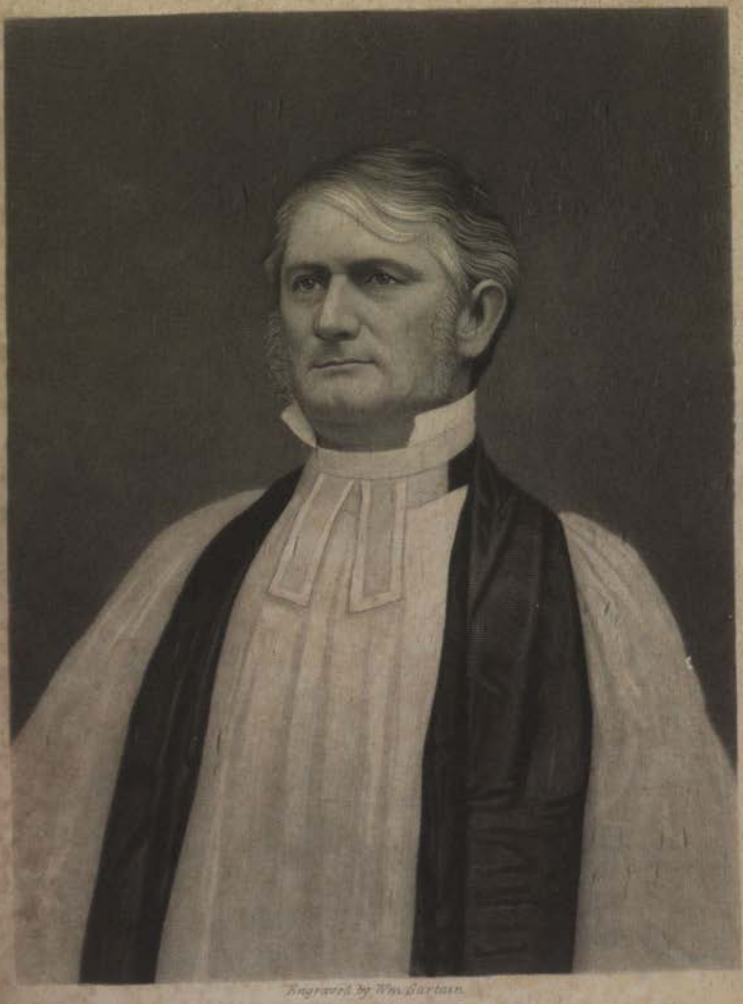

Engraved by Wm. Hartsen.

Leonidas Polk

BISHOP OF LOUISIANA [1861]

LEONIDAS POLK

BISHOP AND GENERAL

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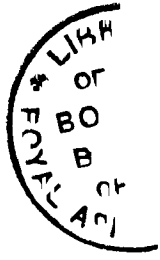
BY

WILLIAM M. POLK, M. D., LL. D.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II



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NOTE TO VOLUME II.

THE author has delayed the publication of this work that he might have access to the volumes of the "Official Records of the Civil War"— so far as they relate to General Polk — in their completeness. This was necessary for the correction of errors of statement occurring in nearly all histories of the war issued prior to the completion of the volumes dealing with the Atlanta campaign [1891].

As an illustration, the author would refer particularly to the valuable work of that distinguished foreigner, the Comte de Paris.

He begs leave to return his especial thanks to Major George B. Davis, of the Board of Publication, and also to General Marcus J. Wright, of this bureau, to whom every Confederate soldier owes a debt of gratitude.

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CHAPTER I.

THE STRUGGLE FOR MISSOURI AND KENTUCKY.

JULY TO OCTOBER, 1861.

Leonidas Polk major-general in the Confederate army, assigned to command of Department No. 2, July 4, 1861.— Its importance.— Tennessee troops.— General Gideon Pillow.— General Zollicoffer.— Union feeling in East Tennessee.— Proposed invasion of Missouri.— Generals Hardee, McCullough, and Price.— Battle of Wilson's Creek.— General Polk's command enlarged.— Plans for defense of Mississippi River.— Kentucky's neutrality.— Seizes Columbus, Kentucky.— Protest.— Answer. — Correspondence.— General Hardee ordered to the river.— General Jeff. Thompson.— General Polk's movements contribute greatly to Price's success in Missouri.

On the 25th of June, 1861, Leonidas Polk was commissioned a major-general in the provisional army of the Confederate States, and on July 4 he was assigned to the command of Department No. 2, with headquarters at Memphis, Tenn. This department embraced the whole of what was known as West Tennessee; the town of Corinth, Miss., with the adjacent country; a small strip of Alabama extending from the town of Waterloo on the west to that of Stevenson on the east; the counties of the States of Mississippi and Arkansas adjacent to the Mississippi River; the riparian parishes of Louisiana north of the Red River; and a section of the State of Arkansas, including the counties bordering the Mississippi and the districts lying to the north and east of the White and Black rivers. To the general in

command of this department the Confederate Government committed the defense of the Mississippi River.

General Polk was well aware that he had been assigned to the most important military position in the Confederacy. He felt sure that the southern States could withstand any force that might be brought against them from other directions; but he knew that their strength would be taxed to the utmost if the invading forces should advance from the Northwest by the way of the Mississippi. That the invasion would ultimately, if not immediately, be made on that line, he was fully persuaded, because, as the event proved, it was the line which good military judgment would select, and also because the people of the Northwest were already crying out against the closing of the Mississippi, which obstructed their commerce and depressed their industries, as well as offended their pride. He was not insensible to the honor which had been done him by the government in assigning him to the command of that department; but while he appreciated the confidence reposed in his judgment and capacity, he would have preferred that the Department of the Mississippi should be committed to General Albert Sidney Johnston or to General Lee. He made the strongest representations to President Davis that one of these accomplished soldiers should have that appointment; and, for reasons which were urged with great clearness and force, he expressed his belief that General Johnston should be preferred for that particular work. Unfortunately, the services of General Johnston were not immediately available, as that officer was then making his long journey overland from California, and the date of his expected arrival was uncertain. General Lee was needed in Virginia, and the support of General Joseph Johnston and General Beauregard was felt to be

indispensable in view of the then impending attack on Richmond. President Davis therefore insisted that General Polk must accept command in the Department of the Mississippi, at least until General Albert Sidney Johnston should arrive; and, relying, as we have seen, on the assurance that he should be relieved at the earliest time which should be consistent with the public safety, he assumed command on July 13, 1861.

The difficulties with which he had to contend were very great. The militia of the State of Tennessee had not yet been transferred to the Confederate army, and the only troops which were legally under his authority were a few regiments at Corinth and some unarmed companies in Memphis and Vicksburg; but until a regular and legal transfer could be made, the Tennessee authorities consented that the State troops should serve under General Polk's orders. Within the limits of the Department there were about ten thousand men of this description, but, notwithstanding the most energetic efforts of their commander, General Pillow, many of them were without arms, and ordnance supplies of all sorts were still entirely inadequate. To these deficiencies General Polk first turned his attention, and, with the assistance of Captain Richard Hunt as ordnance officer, he soon had that branch of the service in working order. Commissariat supplies were more easily provided, as the crops were abundant; but the supply of money, or any substitute for money, was so insufficient that Polk was obliged to purchase many necessaries for the troops on the faith of his personal credit; and for some time the only money at his disposal for that purpose was obtained by discounting his personal notes of hand.

While on his way from Richmond to assume command of his department, General Polk passed through

East Tennessee, and he availed himself of that opportunity to investigate the condition of affairs there. Unlike the middle and western portions of the State, the people of East Tennessee had been generally opposed to secession, and after the adoption of the Ordinance of Secession a majority of them showed a strong disposition to resist the union of their part of the State with the Confederacy. With few exceptions, the mountaineers of Kentucky and Western Virginia were in active sympathy with the Unionists of East Tennessee in their hostility to the Confederacy. The principal railroad connecting Polk's department with Virginia passed through the disaffected region; and it was therefore of the first importance that the administration of that district should be committed to competent hands. On reaching Nashville, therefore, he held a consultation with Governor Harris, after which he sent a telegraphic dispatch to the Confederate Government urging that no time should be lost in sending a sufficient force under a good commander into East Tennessee. The officer whom General Polk recommended was General Zollicoffer, a man of quiet and reserved demeanor, under which, however, he concealed an abundance of real kindness and humanity. He was a man with whom no one of any rank would be likely to take a liberty, and yet there was not a soldier in his command who would have hesitated to approach him with a complaint of any real grievance, or who doubted that, if he did so, he would be heard with patience and treated with justice. Zollicoffer was a man of method, and his habits of order were speedily applied to the conduct of public affairs in the delicate position to which the government, at General Polk's request, appointed him. He cared little for temporary popularity, and he was one of those men

whose merits are best seen in times of trial and danger. He fell on the field of battle before he had had an opportunity to prove his military talents, but many of his contemporaries believed, and some of them still believe, that he was the ablest military commander whom the State of Tennessee at that time gave to the cause of the Confederacy. His appointment was a great relief to General Polk, whose most pressing anxieties at that moment were connected with the condition of affairs in East Tennessee and in Missouri. Having provided for the former, he proceeded to Memphis with a sense of security, at least upon his right flank. He desired, however, that this security should be established by moral influences rather than by military force; and on his arrival at Memphis he lost no time in inviting a deputation of citizens belonging to the western part of the State to visit and confer with the leaders of the disaffected party in Eastern Tennessee. In a letter to the gentlemen whom he selected for this delicate mission, he wrote:

I am satisfied that many of our fellow-countrymen in East Tennessee have, by the course of events, been forced into occupying a position in regard to the question pending between the North and the South which is hardly in keeping with their natural relations, and from which it is our duty, in a spirit of magnanimity, to do what we can to relieve them. Without entering into the question at issue, I feel confident that, if they are assured by their southern fellow-countrymen of their disposition to treat them with kindness, and to respect their manly feelings, while they are making provision for the protection of our own Tennessee soil against invasion from the North, they will have no reason to feel aggrieved by the presence of troops in their midst. They must see that the policy of the United States Government is to overrun and subjugate us, and they also know that they are threatening to do this through the passes of the Tennessee Mountains.

What are we to do, then? But one thing is left us, and that is to place troops at all of those points at which we are most exposed. This, assuredly, in the face of the facts alluded to, should form no just ground for complaint on the part of any candid men of sense. It is upon every account desirable that no irritating language or any offensive bearing should be manifested by the troops toward the citizens of East Tennessee or elsewhere, and the commanders will doubtless see that this is not done. Your well-known character and position in relation to the public questions which have agitated us make it, in my opinion, a very proper office for you to perform, to go to our fellow-citizens of East Tennessee, and, with fraternal words and unfeigned kindness, to endeavor to advise them to waive their opposition to the decision of the majority of the voters of the State, and to become hereafter, as heretofore, with us a united band of brothers.

Neither Missouri nor Kentucky had been included in General Polk's department; and although he had received no specific orders concerning those States, it was understood that they were not to be entered by Confederate troops unless such a movement should be rendered necessary by some action of the Federal Government. In Kentucky the State authorities were still maintaining an attitude of neutrality, which for the present offered some slight guarantee of security in that quarter; but Missouri was practically in the hands of the Federal Government. Price had been driven with the State forces into the southwestern corner of Missouri, where he had formed a junction with the Confederate troops under McCullough. Polk saw that it was necessary to create a diversion in Price's favor, and, at the same time, to turn the attention of the Federals as much as possible away from the Mississippi River, in order to gain time to perfect his preparations for its defense. He therefore determined to threaten St. Louis from the direction of

the Ironton Railroad. Hardee, who had just been assigned to the command of northern Arkansas, agreed to coöperate in the movement to the extent of his ability, and Pillow was ordered to occupy New Madrid on the Missouri shore, from which point he would have before him the most practicable road into the interior. While these preparations were in progress, the Governor of Missouri arrived at Memphis, on his way to Richmond, for the purpose of securing a prompt interference by the Confederates in the affairs of his State. He came directly from the camps of McCullough and Price; and Polk, fully accepting his account of their forces as authentic and reliable, agreed, in the terms of the following letter to the Confederate Secretary of War, to extend the scope of the campaign:

July 23.

The Governor of Tennessee is still waiting for information he has been soliciting, as I understand him, from the War Department as to certain details, before he transfers his army.

In the mean time he consents to allow that army to be directed by me in certain operations I deem now expedient in Missouri. I have therefore directed General Pillow to detach from the force in the western district of Tennessee a column of 6000 troops of various arms, and to make a movement on Missouri through New Madrid. He will be joined, so soon as he lands, by 3000 Missourians, now posted near that place, and, as he goes forward, by other forces that are prepared to come to him. Governor Jackson arrived here yesterday while my preparations were in progress, and I shall find him willing, I think, instead of proceeding to Richmond, as he was intending, to return to Missouri, to aid in raising and concentrating his people. (Since writing the above the governor gives his consent to return to Missouri with our troops.) I am advised by General Hardee that he is at Pocahontas, and will soon have a column of 7000 men ready to

coöperate with Pillow's column. There are about 2500 Missourians near him who will join him. Governor Jackson left McCullough's camp, on the Arkansas line, on the 12th. McCullough's force consisted of 6000 men—Louisianians and troops from Arkansas. He was expecting every moment a Texas regiment and an additional Arkansas regiment. His force, I learn, is well distributed as to the different descriptions of arms. Near him is General Price, twelve miles distant, with a force of 12,000 Missourians, ready to coöperate with him. This column of 25,000 men I am in communication with. They will advance on the enemy's position (Springfield), where I learn General Lyon has concentrated the principal part of his force, say 10,000 or 12,000 men. In the mean time I shall, on Saturday next, direct the column of which I have spoken, under General Pillow, to cross the river to New Madrid, and take up the line of march into Missouri for Ironton. He will be joined by 3000 Missourians, now near New Madrid, very fairly armed and equipped, and by the time he is ready to move I shall send him two other regiments (Martin's and Bowen's), both of which are nearly ready for the field. With this force of 11,000, having as a part of its appointments three batteries complete, with two extra guns, he will find no difficulty in reaching the point indicated. At that point he will be joined by General Hardee, with a column of 7000, who will move about the same time from Pocahontas. They are directed to pass in behind Lyon's force by land, or to proceed to St. Louis, seize it, and, taking possession of the boats at that point, to proceed up the river Missouri, raising the Missourians as they go, and, at such point as may appear most suitable, to detach a force to cut off Lyon's return from the West. Any supporting force that may become necessary I will draw from Arkansas, from whence I am promised 10,000 additional troops at an early day. I shall draw three of the regiments to go with Pillow from Union City, and shall order up the three Mississippi regiments, under General Clark, to replace them. General Clark's headquarters will be transferred to Union City. General Cheatham will accompany General Pillow.

As to the force on this side the river, Governor Harris is increasing it by fresh accessions, and it will in a few days be as strong as it was before we sent forward the five regiments you called for. I find, too, I could strengthen it very materially by drawing men from Kentucky and organizing them on the border, and I may add that every man we draw out of Kentucky relieves us from drawing by so much on Tennessee and the States south of us. I submit to the Department, therefore, whether facilities—extra facilities—should not be placed at our disposal for drawing a force from Kentucky.

As to Bird's Point and Cairo, I know the exact force there to be about five thousand men, divided between the two places. I have also information that they are short of men in Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio, who could be spared now to give support to Cairo. Besides that, they are without arms. I have no apprehension, therefore, of any strong support being sent to that point while I am operating in Missouri, or that they could send in any force strong enough in my rear to be formidable. Added to that, my forces at Union City and Randolph will hold them in check. If, as I think, I can drive the enemy from Missouri with the force indicated, I will then enter Illinois and take Cairo in the rear on my return. With the prestige of your great success at Manassas, the spirits of our troops are high, and we trust we may count on favorable results.

On July 28 General Pillow occupied New Madrid with a force of six thousand men, defectively organized, and so incompletely armed that several regiments were almost without a gun. These deficiencies were accepted as defects which might be speedily remedied, but other obstacles of a more serious nature were now encountered. No sooner had the step been taken than General Polk began to see that there were serious if not insuperable difficulties in the way of an extended movement into Missouri at that time. The only forces under his own direct command were Pillow's column at New Madrid.

Hardee and McCullough were in command of independent departments, and reported directly to Richmond; and while they would no doubt have been permitted to move into Missouri, their orders looked only to defensive measures on their respective fronts. Hardee was willing to coöperate with Polk, but upon closer examination he found his resources so far short of what he had anticipated and felt to be necessary to success, that he was constrained to ask for more time. It was learned that Price's force was barely half as strong as Governor Jackson had reported; and McCullough, declaring that he had no confidence either in Price or in his army, which he described as a mob without a leader, positively declined to coöperate with them. In this state of affairs General Polk was compelled to return, for the moment, to his original design. He therefore made the following report to the Secretary of War:

July 28.

I had the honor of addressing you a few days ago, informing you of a movement I was contemplating on Missouri. I submitted a statement of what I understood to be the force which had been collected by Generals McCullough and Pearce, of Arkansas, General Price, of Missouri, and General Hardee. The information submitted was based, as far as the commands of the first three generals are concerned, on information I obtained from Governor Jackson, of Missouri, who came directly from their respective camps. The force under General Hardee I obtained from a letter from himself. My letter containing the plan of the campaign I submitted was written upon the supposition that this information was correct. Since dispatching that letter I have directed General Pillow to move a column of six thousand across the river to New Madrid. The details of the movement have been left to him, and the forces employed were exclusively those hitherto belonging to his command. Part were taken from Randolph and part from Union City. General Cheatham accompanied

him, and I have ordered General Clark to move up from Corinth to Union City the two Mississippi regiments at that place, to replace those withdrawn, and himself to replace General Cheatham in the command of that post. I have not as yet heard from General Pillow the result of the movement beyond Randolph. The boats with troops from that point left there last night.

Since yesterday I have had to arrive at headquarters the gentleman who is the bearer of this, Colonel Little, adjutant-general of the forces of Missouri. He comes directly from General Price's camp. From him I learn that the force stated to be under the command of the respective generals above, as stated by Governor Jackson, is greatly exaggerated, to the extent, indeed, of *one half*. As a military man, he would, of course, be likely to be more accurate than the governor, and his position of adjutant would compel him to know the extent of his own immediate force. The governor, I do not doubt, was deceived, and withal not perhaps very critical as to details.

This abatement of the force disposable for the invasion of Missouri has caused me to pause in the execution of the plan indicated. I shall proceed to fortify my position at New Madrid with a view of making it a base of operations, and will move forward as soon as circumstances may allow.

My opinion is, nevertheless, that now is the time to operate in Missouri, if we are to do anything toward setting her on her feet again; and I am also satisfied that the enemy in Virginia will be content for some months to come with their experiences at Manassas, and that they will make no forward movement there very soon. That will set them free to act in the West, and they will most probably commence active operations in Missouri. In that event we must have additional troops, and I submit whether I be not authorized to collect a force in Tennessee and from the States below sufficient to enable us to act vigorously in Missouri, while we maintain a strong position in front of Kentucky, ready for any contingency that may arise in that quarter. I shall find no difficulty in getting the force I need around me if I have the requisite authority.

By the 7th of August General Hardee had organized a force of about 3000 men and moved up to Greenville in Missouri, reporting to General Polk that he was ready to coöperate with General Pillow in the movement into that State. Pillow was immediately directed to abandon New Madrid and to join Hardee; and General Polk notified McCullough of the movement, expressing the hope that he might now see his way clear to an advance of his troops with a view to the concentration of all the forces in Missouri according to the original plan.

While the military situation was thus shaping itself in southeastern Missouri, General Lyon was concentrating his forces for an attack upon General Price, who lay to the south of Springfield, in the southwestern part of the State. Price had vainly endeavored to secure McCullough's aid in an attack upon the Federal forces; but upon the receipt of General Polk's dispatch McCullough consented to take command of all the troops to be engaged in the movement. General Lyon, however, did not wait for his approach, but advanced to meet him, and on August 10 fought the battle of Wilson's Creek, which resulted in a crushing defeat of the Federal army and the death on the field of its gallant commander. Meanwhile, Pillow had thrown forward his cavalry to Benton, and his advance column of infantry had reached Sykeston; and as General Polk was fully occupied in his special duty of preparing for the defense of the river, the details of the after-conduct of the campaign were necessarily left to Hardee and Pillow. These generals found it difficult to agree on a plan of operations. Pillow urged a combined attack on the forces at Cape Girardeau and Bird's Point, opposite Cairo, preparatory to an advance upon St. Louis; while General Hardee, declining this movement, urged a concentration in front

of Ironton, the capture of that point, and then an advance into the interior of the State, with the expectation of coöperation from Price and McCullough. The latter was unquestionably the proper movement, and General Polk again ordered Pillow to move out and join Hardee in front of Ironton. Before this junction was effected, however, General Hardee, who doubted harmony of action with General Pillow, whom he ranked, wrote to Polk on August 20: "I do not see much prospect of striking a blow. I apprehend that we are all too weak, combined, to march on St. Louis;" but he added, "I am ready and anxious to attempt anything which may afford the prospect of success." This dispatch, together with the more detailed statements of Colonel Borland, who came as General Hardee's envoy, and was empowered to speak for him, satisfied Polk that Hardee, although prepared for the movement, was really opposed to a further advance at that time, because he had little confidence in the voluntary coöperation of the several commands upon which success depended. Hardee was not within Polk's military jurisdiction; he had shown from the first a ready willingness to aid in the campaign to the full extent of his ability; and Polk felt that, under the existing circumstances, Hardee's judgment as to his own movements must be final. Meanwhile, in spite of the victory at Wilson's Creek, General McCullough reported that he was in no condition to advance, or even to repel an attack of the enemy if it should be made, and that he would therefore be compelled to fall back upon Arkansas. Thus, by the end of August the campaign which Polk had projected for the relief of Missouri came to an end. His own opinion of the cause of its failure was expressed in a letter which he wrote to Mr. Davis on August 29:

I have now had ample opportunity to judge of the field you have assigned me, as well as of the fields around me which have been assigned to other officers as theaters for defensive operations, and I am well satisfied, from the workings of the existing arrangements, that a change is necessary.

For these operations to be directed wisely, harmoniously, and successfully, they should be combined from west to east across the Mississippi Valley, and placed under the direction of one head; and that head should have large discretionary powers. Such a position is one of great responsibility, involving and requiring large experience and extensive military knowledge, and I know of no one so well equal to the task as our friend General Albert Sidney Johnston. Such an appointment would cover all the commands of the generals now operating in fields nearest the enemy in the West, and would give universal satisfaction. Indeed, actual experience shows that all the generals now in the western fields, having separate commands, operate to great disadvantage, in consequence of the want of a single head.

I am informed our friend General Johnston is daily expected. I beg very respectfully, but earnestly, to urge upon you the expediency of this appointment. The success of our campaign in this valley may depend upon such an arrangement, and I know of no man who has the capacity to fill the position, who could be had, but General Johnston.

The reply to this communication was an order, dated September 2, extending Polk's command so as to embrace the State of Arkansas and all military operations in the State of Missouri, and with this order came the following letter from the President:

RICHMOND, VA., September 2, 1861.

My dear General: The order assigning you to the command of all operations of the three columns west of the Mississippi, is designed to give a single head to the campaign for the defense of Arkansas and the relief of Missouri.

Unity was a foreseen necessity, and that constituted a

sufficient reason for non-compliance with the numerous applications made to me to give to one of your brigadiers the same rank which you hold.

I regret to learn that you find an unwillingness to volunteer for the war. You know the disadvantage of the constant repetition of the scenes of sickness and sorrow attendant upon the encampments of raw troops. The efficiency of seasoned and instructed troops can alone ensure success to our army. The enemy are profiting by their first lessons. Would that our people would learn from their example.

The great difficulty is to supply arms; we can get more men for the war than we can arm and equip, so that we cannot afford to arm men for shorter terms. If troops offer to you for twelve months, armed and equipped, you can accept them for that term; but first you would do well to explain to them that it were better for them and for the cause in which we are engaged, that they should enter for the war. You must have a more cordial coöperation of the three columns, and to this end employ any one who disturbs the harmony of joint action upon some service near to your headquarters and under your more immediate supervision.

Get all the troops you can raise with their hunting-rifles; they will make your best skirmishers if properly organized and commanded. If General Pillow be necessary with the batteries for river defense, you have, in General Cheatham, a brave and zealous officer who will lead a column and fully coöperate with any other commander with whom he may happen to do duty, and whose rank will entitle him to command the whole. Keep me better advised of your forces and purposes. It is only when forewarned that I can meet your wishes or your wants. In proportion as our means are small, so do we need to have long notice.

I have been quite sick, and have not before attempted to write a letter since my convalescence.

May God have you in his keeping, and bless your efforts with all deserved success. Sincerely your friend,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

MAJOR-GENERAL L. POLK.

The opportunity for an aggressive movement into Missouri had by this time passed. To meet the advance of General Pillow and General Hardee, General Fremont had collected a considerable force at Cairo and the adjacent posts of Cape Girardeau and Bird's Point. Several gunboats had been added to the Federal force, so that, as the Confederates were without a single boat, this force was in a position to make a descent upon the river at any moment.

Island No. 10 had been occupied for about two weeks, but the demands upon the Ordnance Department, first for Pillow's movement and next for Zollicoffer's new department in East Tennessee, had left only six guns to be placed in position at that point. Fort Pillow was better prepared, but it could have offered only a feeble resistance to a combined attack by water and land. If General Polk had had at his disposal but 5000 of the troops which were then being sent to Virginia, or which were held on the coast by States whose safety depended upon the strengthening of his line of defense, he would have been able vigorously to prosecute the campaign in Missouri without jeopardizing his position on the river, and without risk to the important interests of his department in the direction of Kentucky. His correspondence shows that he was keenly alive to the possibilities of the situation and to their importance to the Confederacy. In a dispatch dated July 28 he had urged the necessity of reinforcements, but they were not sent. In these circumstances it was evident that he must now devote his entire energies to the defense of the Mississippi, and, for the present, to that alone.

Even during the abortive movement into Missouri he had been deeply engaged in the study of the problems connected with the defenses of the river above Mem-

phis; and the most perplexing of them was that of securing heavy guns for the works which it would be necessary to construct. Fort Pillow had been partly built before he took command, and although General Polk was not wholly satisfied with its location, its completion was pressed with all possible speed. Island No. 10 was occupied about the middle of August; but it was evident to General Polk that the State authorities of Kentucky would be unable to maintain a position of neutrality, and that their inability or unwillingness to keep the Federal troops out of that State would very soon make it imperatively necessary to the safety of his own position that he should occupy certain strategic points within the borders of Kentucky. He was anxious, if possible, to occupy Paducah, but Columbus he was determined to secure at all hazards. In preparation for the occupation of Columbus, Clark's command was moved up from Corinth to Union City on the Kentucky border; and on August 26—the very day on which he suspended Pillow's advance toward Ironton—General Polk suggested to Hardee that he should move his force over to New Madrid and there unite the two commands, in order that they might be in readiness for the contemplated movement up the river. Hardee, however, had fallen back toward Arkansas, and was too far distant to coöperate with him just then. For Polk's especial work Columbus was more important than Paducah; for at Columbus, as he clearly saw, he must establish his first line of defense, his second being at Island No. 10, and his third at Fort Pillow. The position of Island No. 10 made it in some respects the strongest of the three; but the high bluffs of Columbus gave a better command of the river. He determined, therefore, that Columbus must be occupied, and that all the resources of military

science and ordnance should be applied to make it formidable. From the time when this plan was first matured until he was ordered, more than half a year later, to evacuate Columbus, there was not a day on which he was not actively engaged in some detail of its execution.

The attempted neutrality of Kentucky was one of the embarrassments of the military situation in the West. As soon as war between the States was seen to be inevitable, the authorities of Kentucky proclaimed that their Commonwealth would observe a strict neutrality between the contending sections; and in a feeble way they began the formation of a "State Guard" for the maintenance of a neutrality which was as rational and feasible as the neutrality of wheat betwixt the upper and nether millstones. For the Federal Government to respect the neutrality of Kentucky would have been to recognize and concede the right of secession in the more southern State; for the assertion by a single State of the right to repudiate its federal obligations while pretending to retain its place in the Union, was the most extreme and the most offensive — as it was certainly the most illogical — form in which the right of absolute State sovereignty, and with it the right of secession, could be expressed. It was manifest from the first that no such neutrality could be maintained, and its proclamation caused a nearly equal embarrassment to both sides. The Unionist leaders of Kentucky feared that an "invasion" of the State by Federal forces, in defiance of their proclamation, would drive it openly and officially into the arms of the South; and the Confederate authorities, hampered by the doctrine of State rights, were reluctant to invade a State which declared that it was not at war with them. Meanwhile General Polk was left by the Richmond government without instructions concerning

the extent to which Kentucky's neutrality must be respected; and seeing that the responsibility in the premises rested upon him, he soon made up his mind that he would respect the neutrality of Kentucky just so long as it should be consistent with the safety of his command, and no longer. With this view, as we have seen, he placed a force on the border to be in readiness to take instant action when the necessity which he anticipated should occur. It came sooner than he expected. On August 28 General Fremont assigned General Grant to the command of the Federal troops in southeast Missouri, to operate against the force which General Polk had been endeavoring to push into that part of the State. In the letter in which General Fremont assigned General Grant to that duty, he added that, in connection with the operations in southeast Missouri, his intention was to occupy Columbus, Ky. With that end in view, a land and naval force was dispatched, under Colonel Wagner, to occupy and hold the town of Belmont on the Missouri shore opposite Columbus, and, having effected a landing on September 2, it remained there awaiting further orders.

In the mean time General Polk had moved Pillow back to New Madrid, and on learning of the Federal occupation of Belmont he directed Pillow to move on Columbus. On the 3d of September the troops were pushed forward from Union City, and on the 4th he occupied Columbus with his combined forces, anticipating General Grant's movement by a little more than twenty-four hours. That officer had been unable to effect his combinations as rapidly as the occasion demanded, and he had been so completely misinformed of the movements of Polk's force, that, on the 4th—that is, on the day when Columbus was entered by the Confederates—Grant was en-

gaged in preparations to seize it on the night of the 5th.[1]

It had been Polk's design to occupy Paducah as well as Columbus. This purpose, however, he felt himself obliged to forego, in view of the ease and rapidity with which the Federal troops could be concentrated for an attack on either place. Their gunboats and other means of river transport, both on the Ohio and on the Mississippi, gave them advantages for massing their forces at either point, with which Polk knew that, even on the shortest lines at his disposal, he could not cope. Meanwhile the Federal authorities, finding that their own designs had been anticipated and forestalled, converted the Confederate occupation of Columbus into an excuse for the seizure of Paducah and the occupation of the Kentucky shore opposite Cairo. There is nothing to be said against the right of the Union army to occupy those places in Kentucky, and it was doubtless expedient to offer some excuse for the Federal breach of Kentucky's neutrality; but the excuse which was alleged was utterly false. Paducah was not seized because the Confederates had occupied Columbus; Fremont's instructions to Grant show that the Federals had fully resolved to occupy both Columbus and Paducah in accordance with plans that had been made, and in pursuance of orders that had been given, before the Confederate occupation of Columbus had taken place. But the tenderness with which the Federal Government affected to treat Kentucky's neutrality was undoubtedly judicious, and was fully rewarded by the material aid subsequently received from the leaders of the Union cause in that State, as soon afterward appeared in the correspondence between them and the Confederates.

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," Series I, vol. iii, pp. 612, 617, 618.

When it was known at Richmond that the Confederate forces had invaded Kentucky, the Secretary of War instantly ordered Polk to withdraw them. The Governor of Tennessee also urged him to retire without delay. Polk, however, referred the matter to Mr. Davis, and firmly declared his intention, unless otherwise positively ordered, to hold the position which he had gained. When the question was submitted to Mr. Davis, his reply was, "The necessity justifies the action." Nevertheless, the military situation was still so intricately involved with questions wholly political, and everything affecting the doctrine of State sovereignty was regarded as of such fundamental importance that some considerable time elapsed and much correspondence passed before Polk was fully sustained by the Confederate authorities.

As soon as time permitted, General Polk wrote, under date of September 8, to Mr. Magoffin, the Governor of Kentucky:

I should have dispatched you immediately, as the troops under my command took possession of this position, the very few words I addressed to the people here; but my duties since that time so preoccupied me that I have but now the first leisure moment to communicate with you. It would be sufficient for me to inform you (as my short address here will do) that I had information on which I could rely, that the Federal forces intended and were preparing to seize Columbus. I need not describe to you the danger resulting to West Tennessee from such occupation. My responsibility could not permit me quietly to lose to the command entrusted to me so important a position. In evidence of the accuracy of the information I possessed, I will state that, as the Confederate troops approached this place, the Federal troops were found in formidable numbers in position upon the opposite bank, with their cannon turned upon Columbus. The citizens of

the town had fled with terror, and not a word of assurance, or safety, or protection had been addressed to them.

Since I have taken possession of this place, I have been informed by highly responsible citizens of your State that certain representatives of the Federal Government are setting up complaints of my act of occupying it, and are making it a pretext for seizing other positions. Upon this proceeding I have no comment to make; but I am prepared to say that I will agree to withdraw the Confederate troops from Kentucky, provided that she will agree that the troops of the Federal Government be withdrawn simultaneously, with a guarantee (which I will give reciprocally for the Confederate Government) that the Federal troops shall not be allowed to enter or occupy any point of Kentucky in the future.

No sooner was this letter forwarded than the following communication was received from the chairman of a committee appointed by the State legislature (September 9):

I have the honor to enclose herewith a resolution of the Senate of Kentucky, adopted by that body upon the reception of intelligence of the military occupation of Hickman, Chalk Bank, and Columbus by the Confederate troops under your command. I need not say that the people of Kentucky are profoundly astonished that such an act should have been committed by the Confederates, and especially that they should have been the first to do so with an equipped and regularly organized army.

The people of Kentucky having with great unanimity determined upon a position of neutrality in the unhappy war now being waged, and which they had tried in vain to prevent, had hoped that one place at least in this great nation might remain uninvaded by passion, and through whose good offices something might be done to end the war, or at least to mitigate its horrors; or, if this were not possible, that she might be left to choose her destiny without disturbance from any quarter.

In obedience to the thrice-repeated will of the people, as expressed at the polls, and in their name, I ask you to withdraw your forces from the soil of Kentucky.

I will say, in conclusion, that all the people of the State await, in deep suspense, your action in the premises.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant, etc.,

JOHN M. JOHNSON,
Chairman of Committee.

To this, General Polk, under the same date, replied:

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date, conveying to me a copy of a resolution of the Senate of Kentucky, under which a committee (of which you are chairman) was raised "for the purpose of considering the reported occupation of Hickman and other points in Kentucky by Confederate troops, and that they take into consideration the reported occupation of Paducah and other points in Kentucky by the Federal authorities, and report thereon"; also, that they be "directed to obtain all the facts they can in reference to the recent occupation of Kentucky soil by the Confederate and Federal forces, and report in writing at as early a day as practicable."

From the terms of the resolution it appears your office as committeemen was restricted merely to collecting the facts in reference to the recent occupation of Kentucky soil by the Confederate and Federal forces, and to report thereon in writing at as early a day as possible. In answer to these resolutions I have respectfully to say that, so far as the Confederate forces are concerned, the facts are plain and shortly stated. The government which they represent, recognizing as a fundamental principle the right of sovereign States to take such a position as they choose in regard to their relations with other States, was compelled by that principle to concede to Kentucky the right to assume the position of neutrality which she has chosen in the passing struggle. This it has done on all occasions and without an exception. The cases alluded to by His Excellency, Governor Magoffin, in his recent

message as "raids," I presume, are the cases of the steamers "Cheney" and "Orr." The former was the unauthorized and unrecognized act of certain citizens of Alabama, and the latter the act of certain citizens of Tennessee and others, and was an act of reprisal. They cannot, therefore, be charged in any sense as acts of the Confederate Government.

The first and only instance in which the neutrality of Kentucky has been disregarded is that in which the troops under my command, and by my direction, took possession of the place I now hold, and so much of the territory between it and the Tennessee line as was necessary for me to pass over in order to reach it. This act finds abundant justification in the history of the concessions granted to the Federal Government by Kentucky ever since the war began, notwithstanding the position of neutrality which she has assumed and the firmness with which she has proclaimed her intention to maintain it. That history shows the following among other facts: In January the House of Representatives of Kentucky passed anti-coercion resolutions — only four dissenting. The governor, in May, issued his neutrality proclamation. The address of the Union Central Committee, including Mr. James Speed, Mr. Prentice, and other prominent Union men, in April, proclaimed neutrality as a policy of Kentucky, and claimed that an attempt to coerce the South should induce Kentucky to make common cause with her and take part in the contest on her side "without counting the cost." The Union speakers and papers, with few exceptions, claimed, up to the last election, that the Union vote was strict neutrality and peace. These facts and events gave assurance of the integrity of the avowed purpose of your State, and we were content with the position she assumed.

Since the election, however, she has allowed the seizure in her ports (Paducah) of property of citizens of the Confederate States; she has by her members in the Congress of the United States voted supplies of men and money to carry on the war against the Confederate States; she has allowed the Federal Government to cut timber from her forests for the purpose of building armed boats for the in-

vasion of the southern States; she is permitting to be enlisted in her territory troops, not only of her own citizens, but the citizens of other States, for the purpose of being armed and used in offensive warfare against the Confederate States. At Camp Robinson, in the county of Garrard, there are now ten thousand troops, if the newspapers can be relied upon, in which men from Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois are mustered with Kentuckians into the service of the United States, and armed by that government for the avowed purpose of giving aid to the disaffected in one of the Confederate States, and of carrying out the designs of that government for their subjugation. Notwithstanding all these and other facts of a similar character, the Confederate States have continued to respect the attitude which Kentucky has assumed as a neutral, and forborne from reprisals, in the hope that Kentucky would yet enforce respect for her position on the part of the Government of the United States. Our patient expectation has been disappointed, and it was only when we perceived that this continued indifference to our rights and our safety was about to culminate in the seizure of an important part of her territory by the United States forces for offensive operations against the Confederate States, that a regard for self-preservation demanded of us to seize it in advance. We are here, therefore, not by choice, but of necessity; and, as I have had the honor to say in the communication addressed to His Excellency, Governor Magoffin, a copy of which is herewith enclosed and submitted as a part of my reply, so I now repeat, in answer to your request, that I am prepared to agree to withdraw the Confederate troops from Kentucky, provided she will agree that the troops of the Federal Government be withdrawn simultaneously, with a guarantee (which I will give reciprocally for the Confederate Government) that the Federal troops shall not be allowed to enter or occupy any part of Kentucky for the future.

In view of the facts submitted, I cannot but think the world at large will find it difficult to appreciate the "profound astonishment" with which you say the people of

Kentucky received the intelligence of the occupation of this place.

I have the honor to be, respectfully,

Your obedient servant, etc.,

LEONIDAS POLK,

Major-General Commanding.

A second communication was received, on September 13, from a committee of citizens representing the element in the State which favored a union with the Confederate States. This letter, together with the correspondence with the legislature, Polk forwarded to Mr. Davis, making the following comment upon the communication from the citizens:

COLUMBUS, September 14, 1861.

His Excellency, Jefferson Davis, President, etc.: Enclosed I send you a letter from two distinguished gentlemen of Kentucky which will explain itself. My own opinion is, they overrate the importance of the seizure on the public mind of Kentucky. This is, as I regard it, from other sources of information. They both agree that the course Kentucky has pursued deprives her of the right to protest, and, so far as the protection of Tennessee is concerned, the seizure in a military point of view was a necessity. Both deplore the effect on what they think its political influence. I believe, if we could have found a respectable pretext, it would have been better to have seized this place some months ago, as I am convinced we had more friends then in Kentucky than we have had since, and every hour's delay made against us. Kentucky was fast melting away under the influence of the Lincoln Government. If we make the stand now, and do it vigorously, we shall find we have more allies in the State than we shall ever have at any future day; and if our arms should be successful in a few battles, the State will soon abandon the position which fear of the power of the Federal Government alone constrains her now to maintain. Give us armies, with

more commanders, and we cannot but believe that the State will rally strongly to our support for their emancipation.

I have the honor to remain, respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

L. POLK,

Major-General Commanding.

The Governor of Kentucky, in obedience to a resolution of the legislature, now issued a proclamation ordering the Confederate troops from the State. This action Polk promptly communicated to Mr. Davis, and received the following reply, dated September 13: "I desire to treat Kentucky with all possible respect; your occupation of Kentucky, being necessary as a defensive measure, will, of course, be limited by the existence of such necessity." At the same time Mr. Davis referred the question to the decision of General Albert Sidney Johnston, who had now arrived and had been assigned to the command in the West.

On September 15 President Davis wrote to General Polk:

Your correspondence with the committee and the Governor of Kentucky has been considered and approved. Governor Harris and others have represented to me that the occupation of Columbus and Hickman would work political detriment to our cause in Kentucky. It is true that the solution of the problem requires the consideration of other than the military elements involved in it; but we cannot permit the indeterminate quantities, the political elements, to control our action in cases of military necessity. Such I regard your occupation of Columbus to be; and your offer to evacuate, upon a reasonable assurance that it would not be occupied and other places continue to be held by the enemy, furnishes all that could be required of respect for the declared neutrality on the part of Kentucky.

Your wish for General A. S. Johnston to command the

operations in the West has been fulfilled. He is now, I suppose, at Nashville, and you will soon have the aid of his presence with the army.

I am gratified that the people of Columbus recognized in you a defender of their rights, and made common cause with you. This alone would suffice to prove that we have adhered to our declared abstinence from any policy of conquest. I feel deeply anxious as to the course of Kentucky, and sincerely trust your expectations will be realized in relation to the people of the section in which you now are.

The question was finally settled by General Johnston, who, after a conference with Governor Harris, and a full consideration of all the facts of the situation, wrote as follows to the President:

NASHVILLE, TENN., September 16, 1861.

His Excellency, Jefferson Davis: I am satisfied that the political bearing of the question presented for my decision has been decided by the Legislature of Kentucky.

The Legislature of Kentucky has required the prompt removal of all Confederate forces from her soil, and the Governor of Kentucky has issued his proclamation to that effect. The troops will not be withdrawn. It is not possible to withdraw them now from Columbus in the west, and from Cumberland Ford in the east, without opening the frontiers of Tennessee and the Mississippi River to the enemy, and this is regarded as essential to our present line of defense as well as to any future operations. So far from yielding to the demand for the withdrawal of our troops, I have determined to occupy Bowling Green at once.

Throughout this anxious time, though the efforts which were made to induce Mr. Davis to order the Confederate forces to evacuate Columbus caused Polk no little uneasiness, he did not allow it to retard his operations in strengthening his position. Military works

were begun on the very day of the occupation, and they were pressed on without intermission and with all possible speed. On September 14, exercising the authority conferred on him by the order of September 2,[1] he ordered Hardee to the Mississippi River near New Madrid, so that he might be at hand for any movement that might be necessary. Paducah still occupied his thoughts, and in a dispatch of the same date to President Davis he wrote: "I hear the Federalists have about 8000 infantry and 1500 cavalry at Paducah. I moved Cheatham's brigade and Stevens's regiment out to-day to Mayfield, to protect my right flank. It is of the highest importance that we should have a large reinforcement *now* to press the enemy before he has time to fortify. He has laid out extensive works around Paducah, and is meaning evidently to make it his base. C. F. Smith is in command."

Writing his wife, September 18, Polk said: "We should have had more force than we had, but the course of things has been such as to have taken an undue proportion of the force of the Mississippi Valley to the east." Again, on September 25, he wrote her: "You have seen why I came here. I shall use this as a starting-point for going farther, as my opinion is that a forward movement is the one for our cause." But more troops could not be had. Men were plentiful, for the enthusiasm of war was upon the people; but arms could not be procured. Zollicoffer was moving into Kentucky on the east, and needed help; in central Kentucky there was an urgent demand for troops to meet the movements of the Federal forces there; Hardee's march was therefore continued to Bowling Green, and Polk had to content himself with the possession of Columbus.

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. iii, p. 702.

The disappointments of the situation in Kentucky, however, were in a measure relieved by the cheering news which soon came from Price. While General Polk had been occupied with affairs in Kentucky, the army of the State of Missouri, which he had tried so hard to aid, had not been idle. In the southeastern portion of that State there was a small force of cavalry under General Jeff. Thompson, which kept the Federal forces about Bird's Point in a constant state of annoyance, and as a source of information concerning the movements of the enemy in that quarter was of much service to the garrison at Columbus. But events of great importance had occurred in other portions of Missouri, which gratified Polk all the more by the assurance that, after all, his movements had been of some service to the Confederates of that State. The advance of his troops into east Missouri, and afterward into Kentucky, had caused the withdrawal of most of the Federal forces to the Mississippi River, and Price, taking advantage of this diversion, had invaded the State and swept everything before him up to the Missouri River. General Polk had shared his scanty supply of war material with that gallant little army; he was still ready to aid it to the extent of his ability; and on October 11 he had the pleasure of receiving the following dispatch from General Price:

HEADQUARTERS, MISSOURI STATE FORCES,
LEXINGTON, MO., September 24, 1861.

General: I have the honor to enclose herewith a requisition for three million of musket percussion-caps that I much need, and which General Harding informs me you have kindly offered to furnish.

I am happy to inform you that I have with my army successfully reached the Missouri River, defeating the enemy wherever they opposed my progress and capturing this place with

scarcely any loss. It is quite a prize to us, for, besides about 3000 prisoners, we have taken more than a million dollars' worth of arms, ammunition, and other property most valuable to us at present. My present force consists of upwards of 20,000 men, and *daily* increasing. I have not yet fully decided on my future movements, which must depend much on those of the enemy, but they will have reference to an early movement on St. Louis. Any suggestions or information from you will be thankfully received, and it will afford me the greatest pleasure to coöperate with you in any operations you may undertake.

I am, general,

With sentiments of much respect and esteem,

STERLING PRICE,
Major-General Commanding.

TO MAJOR-GENERAL L. POLK, C. S. A.,
MEMPHIS, TENN.

The movements of the Missouri State forces of which this letter tells culminated in one of the most successful campaigns of the year; but the ultimate result was of small consequence to the Confederacy, because it was made too late to influence the political status of the State, its entire machinery being then in the hands of those who were in active sympathy with the Federal Government.

This would have been prevented by the campaign planned and urged by General Polk, because at that time the friends of the Confederacy in Missouri were sufficiently numerous and active to secure the State. The bearing of such an accession upon the fortunes of the Confederacy, especially in this quarter, is readily seen by referring to the documents and correspondence of that date dealing with the subject. The matter of special importance in this memoir, however, is General Polk's attitude in this crisis.

He arrived in Memphis on July 13, and on the 23d, in a letter to the Secretary of War, he outlined a campaign which the record shows was not only feasible, but would have been carried out had General Polk been empowered to direct the forces, which in two weeks from the date of this letter could have been put in motion in Missouri.

These facts, together with the remaining events chronicled in this chapter, show not only the comprehensive readiness of the man in his new position, but also the facility with which he grasped the situations confronting him; and the directness with which he moved upon them justified the estimate of his abilities which the assignment to so important a command implied.

To indicate his connection with the events of which this volume treats, the writer will say here, that he served as an artillery officer first, in McCown's division at Columbus, New Madrid, and Island No. 10, then in Clark's division at Shiloh and Corinth, and later in Cheatham's division during the Kentucky campaign, and at Stone River. During the Tullahoma, Chickamauga, Meridian, and Atlanta campaigns, he served on the staff of General Polk. In the subsequent operations of the Army in Tennessee, he served as adjutant to the artillery regiment of Stewart's corps. At the outbreak of the Civil War (then aged sixteen) he was a cadet at the Military Institute of Virginia (Lexington), from which, with one hundred and fifty cadets, he was detached for the purpose of drilling the Virginia troops. This service was performed under the direction of Major Thomas J. Jackson (Stonewall). Later the writer was assigned to similar duty with the Tennessee troops under General Zollicoffer.

CHAPTER II.

BELMONT.

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER, 1861.

General Albert Sidney Johnston assumes command of Department No. 2. —The difficulties of the position.— Polk's estimate of Johnston.—General Polk commands the river defenses.— General Fremont orders Generals Grant and Smith to make a demonstration against Columbus.— General Grant steams down the Mississippi and disembarks five miles above Belmont.— General Polk sends General Pillow to relief of camp at Belmont.— The battle.— 27th Illinois Regiment.— Numbers engaged on either side.— General Pillow.— Battles of Belmont and Shiloh compared. —Exchange of prisoners.— Correspondence between General Polk and General Grant.— Letter to Mrs. Polk.— Accident to General Polk.— Meeting of the Confederate and Union generals.— The toast to Washington.— Cheatham's way to a settlement of the war.— The narrative of General Sumner's daughter.— A dinner with President Davis.— The death of Major Butler.

On September 15 General Albert Sidney Johnston assumed command of the Confederate forces in the West, including all which were then operating in Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Kentucky. The appointment of this able soldier gave universal satisfaction, and no one rejoiced more than Polk at this accession to the fortunes of the Confederacy. He had known Johnston from boyhood; they had been room-mates at West Point, and in the intimacy of a life-long friendship each of them had learned to know and trust the abilities and qualities of the other. Though they had been separated for many years, Polk had never lost sight of his friend.

On his return from Europe in 1831, he brought with him an onyx-cameo head of Washington, which he sent to Johnston with this message: "I could find nothing so appropriate as a present for you, for I have never known any one whose character so closely resembled Washington's in all respects as your own." Many years later, during the war with Mexico, Bishop Polk asked his kinsman, Mr. Polk, then President of the United States, to reappoint Johnston to the same position which he had resigned some time before, or else to give him a command in one of the new regiments then being raised. Polk's faith in his friend never faltered; and he was among the first, if not the very first, to nominate Johnston for appointment to the chief command in the West. No one better knew the difficulties of that position, and he nominated Johnston because he knew them. He had himself looked over the field; he had estimated its difficulties, and he saw that they were greater than at any other part of the Confederate frontier. The front to be covered extended from Virginia to Kansas. It was intersected by three great rivers, all leading into the very heart of the Confederacy, all communicating with each other, and their communications were in the hands of the Federals. Forts might be built upon them, but where were the heavy guns with which to arm the forts? After all his efforts, Polk had been able to obtain hardly enough for the defense of one river. The rapidly increasing river craft of the Union navy could pass freely from one stream to the others, and upon two of the three Johnston had not a single gun afloat to oppose them. His feeble fleet on the Mississippi could do little more than guard the navigation of the river below Columbus, and that small fleet might be called at any time to the defense of New Orleans. Worst of all, there was no visible prospect of

improvement. Men could be had, and river craft might be built, but there were no guns with which to arm them. Again, while the main body of the Confederate troops were engaged in defending the Mississippi and other rivers, a part must be in Missouri fighting for that State and the protection of Arkansas; and East Tennessee must be held as if it were an enemy's country. The only means of communication between these widely separated flanks were common country dirt-roads on the west of the Mississippi, and east of it roads of the same sort, with one complete and one incomplete line of railroad, both deficient in rolling-stock. The enemy, on the other hand, had but two vital points, Cairo and St. Louis, along his entire line, and from one end of that line to the other he had a continuous water communication, navigable at all times, commanded by his gunboats, and floating a fleet of transports which were equal to the carrying, within a week's time, of 50,000 men from one end of his front to the other. Granting that the enemy might have no more men than Johnston, Polk saw that the odds against the Confederates were far heavier in that quarter than elsewhere. But he had confidence in Johnston's ability to make the best of the situation that was possible to human wisdom, and he never faltered in that belief. After the fall of Fort Henry and Fort Donelson, when disaster swept over the whole department, he felt drawn to Johnston even more closely than before, and he looked forward with undiminished confidence to a day when his friend should be released from his defensive position, and, massing his troops for an attack, should move against the enemy and exhibit to the world a military genius which Polk firmly believed to be of the very highest order. "The currents of these two lives that had so nearly

touched toward their sources, and afterward had parted so widely, moved thereafter with a common purpose to a common end."[1]

On September 21, when Johnston rearranged his department, he assigned Polk to the command of the first division, charging him specially with the defense of the Mississippi River. Concerning this assignment General Johnston's biographer has said: "It was no small consideration to feel that he [General Johnston] had in so responsible a position a friend to whose loyalty of heart and native chivalry he could trust entirely, and one who, if long unused to arms, was yet by virtue of early training and a bold, aggressive spirit every inch a soldier. . . . Henceforth General Polk was the right-arm of his commander."[2] The defenses of the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers were at first included in this division, but Polk had reason to know that the defense of the Mississippi would now more than sufficiently tax the capacity of any one commander, and he desired to be left free to concentrate his energies upon that work. On the Tennessee the construction of works at Fort Henry had been for some weeks under the supervision of an efficient officer, Colonel Heiman, and were fairly well advanced; but the works on the Cumberland, called Fort Donelson, were in a much less satisfactory state of progress. The extension and speedy completion of both forts was of instant importance, and required the undivided attention of an able general officer. Therefore, on October 31, Polk wrote to Johnston:

I beg leave to call the attention of the commanding general to the importance of having some commander of large

[1] Life of General Albert Sidney Johnston, by Colonel William Preston Johnston, p. 318.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 322.

experience and military efficiency put in charge of the defenses of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers. Of the great importance of these channels of communication I need not speak. If they should be occupied and held by the enemy, they must necessarily prove of the most serious inconvenience to our army in Kentucky. I would suggest the propriety of having Colonel Tilghman put in charge of those defenses. The space between General Buckner (at Bowling Green) and myself is now very feebly occupied.

Polk's reluctance to assume the defense of the three rivers may have been caused in part by his intention to retire from the army, because, within a week after this dispatch to Johnston, he forwarded his resignation to Mr. Davis. The history of his repeated efforts to be relieved from military service has already been given, and it is sufficient to observe here that while his resignation was pending he could not but be reluctant to undertake new duties or to enter into new combinations the practical responsibilities of which he would not feel free to throw upon his successor. But this feeling of honorable prudence never deterred him from any service that was necessary to the good of the service; and so long as he should be in the army, his high sense of the duty made him ready and willing not only to obey the orders but to be amenable to the simplest desire of his superior.[1]

The time was rapidly approaching when General Polk would be actively and personally engaged in conflict with the enemy. On the first day of November, 1861, General Fremont ordered General Grant at Cairo, and General C. F. Smith at Paducah, to hold their commands in readiness for a demonstration upon Columbus, the object of which was to cover an effort to drive General Jeff. Thompson from southeast Missouri, and at the same time

[1] See Appendix to Chapter II.

to check the sending of reinforcements to Price. On the 4th and 6th Grant moved Colonels Oglesby, Wallace, and Plummer in the direction of the town of Sykeston, Mo., ordered the garrison at Fort Holt, opposite Cairo, to advance in the direction of Columbus, and early in the morning of the 7th, with a force of about 3500 men of all arms, convoyed by the gunboats "Lexington" and "Tyler," he steamed down the Mississippi River toward the same objective point. Smith, meanwhile, from the direction of Paducah, threw forward his column of 2000 men.

The mobilization of these various commands, about 12,000 men in all, was duly reported to Polk, and with the report came rumors of the enemy's designs. Polk, however, found it difficult to believe that so extensive a movement was really directed against Thompson, whose entire force numbered not more than 1500 men, and was then encamped far down toward Arkansas; and he found it still more difficult to believe that it was intended to prevent the sending of reinforcements to Price, as no Confederate troops from that direction either were, or were likely to be, in motion to join Price. On the other hand, he had for some weeks had reason to expect a determined effort on Grant's part to dislodge him from Columbus, and he inferred that the expected attack was now at hand.

The force at his disposal, including the garrison of Columbus, was then about 10,000 men of all arms. At Belmont, opposite Columbus, he had established a camp of observation, which was then occupied by one regiment of infantry, a battery of artillery, and a squadron of cavalry. In order to command the approaches to this position by the batteries on the high ground at Columbus, the trees had been felled for some distance

along the west bank, and the fallen timber had been so placed as to form an abattis capable of obstructing the advance of an enemy. This camp Grant decided to attack.

Accordingly, at about eight o'clock on the morning of the 7th, he disembarked his force on the Missouri shore, some five miles above Belmont, ordering the gunboats to drop below and engage the batteries at Columbus. Then, quickly forming his column, he pushed for the Confederate camp.

Polk meanwhile had sent General McCowan with a force of infantry and artillery up the east bank of the river, and, learning that the enemy had landed on the west shore, he dispatched General Pillow with four regiments to the aid of the camp. Thus Pillow was provided with a force of 2700 men, of all arms, and little inferior in numbers to that which was about to attack him; but Polk, being anxious that he should have all the men he deemed necessary, sent him another regiment of 500 men, which landed on the Missouri shore at 10.30 A.M., just as the battle began. The opposing forces were virtually equal, and the engagement became general a few minutes before eleven o'clock. Grant, with his line well extended, bore down upon the Confederate position, and, though stubbornly resisted, he gradually fought his way forward, driving the Confederates to the river bank and capturing their camp.

Polk had been deterred in the first instance from sending a larger force to meet Grant's attack by the reports made by his scouts of the movements of the transports upon the river, and of the position and numbers of the columns advancing from Fort Holt and Paducah, which tended to show that the landing upon the opposite bank of the river was a mere feint, while the

real design was an attack upon Columbus. Nevertheless, he had placed at Belmont a force fully equal to that of Grant; and now, finding that this force was being defeated, and learning at the same time that no enemy upon the Kentucky shore was near enough seriously to threaten his position, he promptly moved over to Belmont with additional reinforcements, attacked Grant on the flank and rear, drove him from the field, and pursued him to his transports. After the Confederates had been driven to the river bank, the heavy guns upon the high ground at Columbus were able to rake the Federal position, and contributed materially to Grant's discomfiture. These batteries had an opportunity in this action to test their fire upon gunboats, and the ease with which they repulsed two attacks which the boats attempted argued well for the efficiency of their service. In closing his report of this battle, General Polk said:

On landing I was met by General Pillow and General Cheatham, whom I directed, with the regiments of General Cheatham's command and portions of others, to press the enemy to his boats. This order was executed with alacrity and in double-quick time. The route over which we passed was strewn with the dead and wounded of the conflicts of Colonel Marks and General Cheatham, already alluded to, and with arms, knapsacks, overcoats, etc. On arriving at the point where his transports lay, I ordered the column, headed by the 154th Regiment of Tennessee Volunteers, under cover of a field thickly set with corn, to be deployed along the river bank within easy range of the boats. This being accomplished, a heavy fire was opened upon them simultaneously, riddling them with balls, and, as we had reason to believe, with heavy loss to the enemy. Under this galling fire he cut his lines and retreated from the shore, many of his soldiers being driven overboard by the rush of those behind them. Our fire was returned by heavy cannonading from his gun-

boats, which discharged upon our lines showers of grape, canister, and shell, as they retired with their convoy in the direction of Cairo.

Polk was mistaken in concluding that all the Federal force had re-embarked. In the confusion of the retreat, the 27th Illinois Regiment, under Colonel N. B. Buford, one of Polk's old West Point friends, had been separated from the rest of the command; finding itself abandoned, it made its way northward by a road that lay some little distance from the river, and, reaching the river at a point above that at which General Grant had so precipitately taken to his boats, succeeded, at about dark, in getting on board a transport without molestation. The absence of the Confederate cavalry and the confusion of the pursuit alone prevented the discovery and capture of this force.

The battle of Belmont was long and severe. Beginning at half-past ten o'clock in the morning, it did not end until sunset. The losses on both sides showed the character of the fighting. The Confederate loss was 642 killed, wounded, and missing. That of the Federals must be placed at about 600. Their dead and nearly all their wounded were left upon the field. General Pillow reports that he buried 295 of them, and that, under a flag of truce, the Federals were similarly engaged "a good part of the day." General Grant states that he carried 175 prisoners from the field; and General Polk, that after a liberal exchange, by which he recovered all of his own men, he had still 100 prisoners in his hands. The substantial fruits of victory were therefore with the Confederates; and the Congress at Richmond, in acknowledgment of the fact, passed resolutions commending Polk, his officers, and the troops under his command, for the service rendered.

The chief objects of General Grant's attack, as stated by himself, had been, first, to assist a movement against Thompson's command, and second, to break up the camp at Belmont. If this be so, he failed in both; for the camp was continued, and the disaster to his command compelled him to recall the troops which had been sent after Thompson. He carried off two cannon and a number of sick and wounded Confederates whom he found in their camp; but he fled the field, virtually abandoning one of his regiments, leaving his dead and wounded, a large preponderance of prisoners, a stand of his colors, one thousand stand of arms, and the caissons of his battery, in the hands of the Confederates. His fight, however, had been a gallant one, and at one time the entire Confederate line was swept before his onset. He has estimated his force at 3114 men, while the commander of his 1st Brigade states it was 3500. The discrepancy is, no doubt, accounted for by the fact that five companies were left to guard the transports, thus leaving, for the actual engagement, the number of troops stated by himself. When the battle began, General Pillow had in line 2500 men, exclusive of a squadron of cavalry and a battery, and by eleven o'clock he was joined by Walker's regiment, numbering about 500, thus giving the Confederates a force fully equal to that of their antagonists; and yet they were driven in much confusion from their position. To account for this, several reasons were assigned: the correct one is that the Confederates were at a disadvantage owing to the exposed position in which their line was formed.[1] The evidence shows that most of the line of battle, especially the center, was placed in an exposed position in an open field, with a heavy wood

[1] See reports of subordinates, "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. iii, pp. 320, 331, 362.

about eighty yards distant in its front. Under the cover of this wood the Federal force moved forward its line, and, halting at the timber's edge, raked the field with its fire. The Confederates had been on the ground for several weeks, and the advantageous positions should have been familiar to them. The force sent over to aid in opposing Grant was on the ground quite long enough before the battle began to have found out a better position on which to form, and it stood in line of battle one hour before the Federal attack was made. There were several positions at hand any one of which would have been better. This was especially the case with the ground in the rear of the abattis of felled trees.[1] It is difficult to account for this error of formation without taking into consideration the characteristics of General Pillow, the officer commanding upon the field. Pillow was a man of unlimited personal courage, and upon this occasion, the first in this war in which he had had an opportunity to come to blows with his enemy, he no doubt mentally invested his soldiers with the same capacity for resistance that he felt within himself, overlooking the fact that they were fresh levies and that it was their first engagement. Be this as it may, he soon found that he was unable to hold his position, and therefore attempted to dislodge the concealed foe by a series of gallant charges. These proved of no avail, and after losing heavily he had to give way. In the mean time he must have inflicted heavy loss upon the enemy, for it required the pressure of but two additional regiments, which arrived about twelve o'clock, and numbered together but 1000 men, to drive Grant from the field. The force which won the battle of Belmont was, then, about 4000 men. It is true that an additional reinforcement of two

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. iii, pp. 340–342.

regiments of about 500 men each was sent across the river, but they arrived after the Federal force had been defeated, and took part only in the pursuit.

In short, it may be said that the battle was fought by 3114 Federals against 4000 Confederates, the result being a victory for the latter; and that subsequently the Confederates were reinforced by 1000 men, with whom they took up the pursuit, thus bringing their total upon the field to 5000 of all arms. In comparing this engagement with other battles of the war, the points of resemblance between it and that of Shiloh, fought six months later and upon a more extended scale, must strike every observer. If Shiloh was a defeat for the Confederates, then by a similar chain of occurrences and conclusions Grant was defeated at Belmont. We commend this suggestion to the writers who have claimed Belmont as a Federal victory.

In the following letter, written to Mrs. Polk November 12, the general speaks of the battle and describes a painful accident by which he nearly lost his life:

COLUMBUS, KY., November 12, 1861.

My beloved Wife: I write you a letter with my own hand that you may see I am safe notwithstanding the battle through which we passed on the 7th, and the terrific explosion yesterday of the Dahlgren gun carrying a 128-pound shot. I was standing within ten feet of the gun at the moment of the explosion. The captain of the company to which the squad of men serving the gun belonged was killed on the spot; so were the captain of the gun squad and five others, one of these being one of my aids, Lieutenant Snowden. Two of the men were blown into the river, a hundred feet below. Their bodies have not been recovered. My clothes were torn to pieces, and I was literally covered with dust and fragments of the wreck. I was only injured by the stunning effect of the concussion. (It was about this time yesterday.)

As to the battle of the 7th, I telegraphed you I was well, as was Hamilton, and both unharmed. It was a sharp affair, and, I suppose, for the force engaged, as fierce as any contest of the war. At the outset they had the best of it, and I was really afraid they were going to balance accounts with us for the Leesburg affair. You will remember the field was on the other side of the river, and I had to throw my forces over on steamers. I was at a great disadvantage in the face of a well-served battery, but I shoved the regiments over and followed them. My own batteries were turned upon them from this side, and especially my large favorite from the top of the hill, whose fate I deplore. They soon started from their position and began to retire. The regiments held in reserve by me now supported a flank movement, which I had ordered to be made by Colonel Marks of the 11th Louisiana. The rout became complete. I pressed them hard. For several miles the ground was strewn with their dead, ammunition, knapsacks, and guns, of which latter we got about 1000. We continued our pursuit to their boats, which took them up the river. My own impression is their loss in killed, wounded, and missing cannot fall short of 1000 to 1200. Ours amount to a fraction over 600. They acknowledge their defeat. I will send you their account of the matter. As to the accounts of the affair you find in our papers, they are about as correct as such things generally are.

In this same letter he describes a pleasant meeting with Colonel Buford:

I and others of my officers have spent pretty much the whole day in my boat on the river with Buford (Col. N. B. Buford, 27th Illinois) and his officers, discussing the principles of exchange, and other matters connected with the war. He is as good a fellow as ever lived, and most devotedly my friend; a true Christian, a true soldier, and a gentleman, every inch of him. He said it did him good to come down and talk with me, and he hoped it might be the means of peace, and so on. I was very plain and clear in my position, as you may know, but very kind.

After completing my exchange, I had still about one hundred of their prisoners in my keeping, and among them fifteen or twenty of his regiment. These he was very anxious I should let him take back. He urged me in every way, even on the score of our friendship; but I could not yield, especially to such a plea, which would have subjected me to the charge of subordinating individual preference to public duty. He admitted it, and was obliged to leave without them, but we had a very pleasant day. I went up with him nearly to Cairo. He wanted me to go and spend the night with him; so you see how much we have done on this line toward ameliorating the severities of this unfortunate and wretched state of things.

In another letter to Mrs. Polk, dated November 15, he says:

Since the accident, I have been up the river on two occasions to meet flags of truce; once to meet Grant, and to-day to meet my friend Buford. My interview with General Grant was, on the whole, satisfactory. It was about an exchange of prisoners. He looked rather grave, I thought, like a man who was not at his ease. We talked pleasantly, and I succeeded in getting a smile out of him and then got on well enough. I discussed the principles on which I thought the war should be conducted; denounced all barbarity, vandalism, plundering, and all that, and got him to say that he would join in putting it down. I was favorably impressed with him; he is undoubtedly a man of much force. We have now exchanged five or six flags, and he grows more civil and respectful every time.

It was at one of these conferences, after the business of the flag of truce had been dispatched, and the party had adjourned to partake of a simple luncheon provided by the Confederates, that the gallant Buford, raising his glass, proposed a toast to "George Washington, the Father of his Country." Polk, with a merry twinkle in

his eye, quickly added, "And the first Rebel!" The Federal officers joined with excellent humor in the laughter which followed this sally, and gracefully drank the amended toast.

On another occasion, General Cheatham, who was an ardent devotee of the turf, discovered symptoms of a like weakness in General Grant; and after conversing for some time upon official matters, the conversation drifted to the subject of horses. The congenial topic was pursued to the satisfaction of both parties, until it ended in a gravely humorous suggestion from Cheatham to Grant that, as fighting was so troublesome a business, they might do well to settle the vexing questions about which the sections were at war by a grand international horse-race on the Missouri shore! Grant laughingly answered that he wished it might be so.

The following correspondence between Polk and Grant will show the endeavors of the former to cultivate the amenities of war and to relax its rigorous demands so far as was compatible with the interests of the service.

General Polk to General Grant.

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST DIVISION, WESTERN DEPARTMENT,
COLUMBUS, KY., October 14, 1861.

To the Commanding Officer at Cairo and Bird's Point:

I have in my camp a number of prisoners of the Federal army, and am informed there are prisoners belonging to the Missouri State troops in yours. I propose an exchange of these prisoners, and for that purpose send Captain Polk of the Artillery, and Lieutenant Smith of the Infantry, both of the Confederate army, with a flag of truce, to deliver to you this communication and to know your pleasure.

The principles recognized in the exchange of prisoners effected on the 3d of September between Brigadier-General Pillow of the Confederate army and Colonel Wallace of the

United States army are those I propose as a basis of that now contemplated. Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

LEONIDAS POLK,
Major-General Commanding.

General Grant to General Polk.

HEADQUARTERS, DISTRICT S. E. MISSOURI,
CAIRO, October 14, 1861.

General: Yours of this date is just received. In regard to the exchange of prisoners, I recognize no southern Confederacy myself, but will communicate with higher authority for their views. Should I not be sustained, I will find means of communicating with you. Respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,
Brigadier-General Commanding.

To MAJOR-GENERAL POLK, COLUMBUS, KY.

After the battle of Belmont the following correspondence was exchanged between Generals Grant and Polk:

General Grant to General Polk.

CAIRO, ILL., November 8, 1861.

General Commanding Forces, Columbus, Ky.

Sir: In the skirmish of yesterday, in which both parties have behaved with so much gallantry, many unfortunate men were left upon the field of battle whom it was impossible to provide for.

I now send, in the interest of humanity, to have these unfortunates collected and medical attendance secured them.

Colonel Webster, Chief of Engineers, District Southeast Missouri, goes bearer of this, and will express to you my views upon the course that should be pursued under circumstances such as those of yesterday.

I am, sir, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT, *Brigadier-General.*

General Polk to General Grant.

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST DIVISION, WESTERN DEPARTMENT,
COLUMBUS, KY., November 8, 1861.

Brigadier-General U. S. Grant, U. S. A.:

I have received your note in regard to your wounded and killed left on the battlefield after yesterday's engagement.

The lateness of the hour at which my troops returned to the principal scene of the action prevented my bestowing the care upon your wounded which I desired. Such attentions as were practicable were shown them, and measures were taken at an early hour this morning to have them all brought into my hospitals. Provision was also made for taking care of your dead. The permission you desire under your flag of truce is granted with pleasure, under such restrictions as the exigencies of our service may require.

In your note you say nothing of an exchange of prisoners, though you send me a private message as to your willingness to release certain wounded men and some invalids, taken from our list of sick in camp, and expect in return a corresponding list of prisoners. My own feelings would prompt me to waive again the unimportant affectation of declining to recognize these States as belligerents; but my government requires all prisoners to be placed at the disposal of the Secretary of War. I have dispatched him to know if the case of the severely wounded by me would form an exception.

I have the honor to be

Your obedient servant,
L. POLK,
Major-General, C. S. A.

General Grant to General Polk.

CAIRO, ILL., November 10, 1861.

Major-General Polk, commanding at Columbus, Ky.

General: It grieves me to have to trouble you again with a flag of truce, but Mrs. Colonel Dougherty, whose husband is a prisoner with you, is very anxious to join him under such restrictions as you may impose, and I understand that some

of your officers expressed the opinion that no objections would be interposed.

I will be most happy to reciprocate in a similar manner at any time you may request it.

I am, general, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

U. S. GRANT,
Brigadier-General, U. S. A.

General Polk to General Grant.

HEADQUARTERS, 1ST DIVISION,
WESTERN DEPARTMENT, C. S. A.

Brigadier-General U. S. Grant.

Sir: I am in receipt of your letter under cover of your flag of truce, asking for Mrs. Dougherty the privilege of joining her husband, who was unfortunately wounded in the affair of the 7th.

It gives me great pleasure to grant her the opportunity of rendering such grateful service, and I hope through her attentions the colonel may speedily be restored to such a condition of health as is compatible with the loss he is obliged to sustain.

Reciprocating your expressions of a readiness to interchange kind offices, I remain, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

L. POLK,
Major-General Commanding.

Though General Polk's first battle had resulted in a victory for which he and his officers and men received the public thanks of the Confederate Congress, and though he had never stood higher, nor perhaps so high, in the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, his anxiety to be relieved from military service was greater than ever. It was at this time that he received President Davis's letter declining, for the present, to accept his resignation; and, in the hope of release at a future but

not distant day, he wrote to Mrs. Polk, under date of November 25, as follows:

I am in receipt of your letters informing me that you are comfortably settled in Nashville and satisfied with your location. I hope you and our dear children may have a pleasant winter, or one as much so as in the nature of things is practicable. I often think of you and long for the time to come when I can feel free to be among you, quietly settled, with nothing pressing upon me, so that I could enjoy your society again. This I trust may yet be our privilege, and that too at no very distant day. I am as busy a man as there is on the face of the earth, I dare say. From the time I get up in the morning until I go to bed at night, it is work, work, work, and has been so now for four months. How I manage to stand it, and have as good health as I do have (for I never had better in all my life), is a wonder unto many. But I take everything very quietly and am very patient. I think I have learned something of that virtue by my army experience. I hope, too, that in that respect I have done some good by example.

And again he wrote:

It is Christmas Day! A day on which angels sang "Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good will toward men," and oh! how my heart yearns to join in the same song, if our enemies would let us. Indeed, I may say with truth, I can and do feel the full force of the sentiment of the song toward them. Notwithstanding the warlike purposes in their hearts, I feel no unkindness toward them or toward any living being, and would bless and pray for them if they would let me. But we trust now as ever that the Lord will deliver us out of their hands, and that with a great deliverance, and give them a better mind.

We now give an extract from a sketch of General Polk by Mrs. Margaret Sumner McLean, daughter of the late General Sumner, U. S. A., and wife of Colonel

Eugene E. McLean, formerly captain of the 1st Infantry, U. S. A., and, during the war, of the Confederate army, a portion of the time being attached to the staff of General Polk.

It would be matter of pleasure if our pen could do justice to this brief and faithful chronicle—this picture from life by a gifted woman endowed with rare power of observation and insight into character. We commend it to our readers.

When I call to mind my recollections of General Polk, and remember the change that has taken place in my feelings and judgment from the day I saw him first, as the newly appointed bishop-general, for whom I felt some repugnance, till that last moment when he lay in his coffin,—"done to death" for a cause in which he believed and hallowed,—I seem to have been living two lives. But out of it all there grows stronger and stronger the conviction that such a man never lived and died in vain. Somewhere in this world, in the hearts of those who knew and loved him, must his memory ever evoke images of self-sacrifice, generosity, clear conceptions of right and wrong, a soul undimmed by sordid considerations, a genial manner that must have an ennobling effect.

For myself, his acquaintance was something more than a liberal education; it was an appreciative sympathy in the darkest hour of my life; a wise counsel that was as sorely needed as it was freely given. But these reminiscences ought to tell all this, and more, if at all true to him.

The first time I saw General Polk was in Richmond, at the beginning of the war, when the "Spottswood House" was the Executive Mansion of the Confederacy, and I was one of the party that met daily at dinner in what was known as the President's dining-room, where we met, from time to time, the distinguished men who came to the capital, and whom Mr. Davis was in the habit of entertaining at these informal dinners. On this occasion he introduced General Polk to the party, with a playful remark to the effect that life was said

to be only a circle, and his friend was handsomely illustrating it. I did not understand the application, not remembering, in the rush of events, the history of General Polk, or connecting him in my mind with the Bishop of Louisiana who had graduated at West Point; and when we were called on by Mr. Davis to pledge the new general, I turned, as I raised my glass, and said to my neighbor, "What is it all about?"

"The bishop, you know."

And as it dawned upon me, I showed such a revulsion of feeling that Mrs. Davis, hurriedly, but with the kindness that always characterized her where I was concerned, sent me a scrap of paper with the words, "Don't look so disapprobative." All kinds of revolutionary things were happening in those days, and I was constantly being called on to adjust myself to new positions for which my earlier associations had entirely unfitted me,—such as seeing in society private soldiers and non-commissioned officers of the best families,—and I had learned the necessity before I had appreciated the reasons. So, in this case, I felt grateful to Mrs. Davis, ate my dinner, listened to all that was said, with a running commentary in my own mind not in the least complimentary to either the bishop or the general, though I often told him in after days that in my most prejudiced moments I acknowledged he looked every inch a soldier. And when I met his genial smile, and the least deprecatory expression, which I never saw afterward, it required something of an effort to be true to my principles.

General Polk was never tormented by doubts as to the propriety of his course. Having once made up his mind, he was not the man to look back; but, as he said, it was a new atmosphere, "fresh." I would suggest, "We generally temper it for churchmen," when he would laugh and rub his hands, saying, "Oh, that's too bad! that's too bad!" I see the twinkle in his eye now, and love to remember that in his gay moments, as in his more serious ones, he fulfilled my ideal of the Christian gentleman.

I did not see General Polk after he left Richmond until I

met him in Columbus, under circumstances as different as could well be conceived, but which forever established his claims to my highest respect and admiration. He was at the time in command of the largest army in the West, and guarded the Mississippi at that point so effectually that after the repulse at Belmont the Federal troops never made another attempt to carry that point. We arrived in Columbus, or near it, at the very moment the battle of Belmont was being fought; Belmont being on the opposite or western bank of the river, and held, as we supposed, by Confederate troops. A shot across the bow of our boat, followed quickly by others, told a different tale, and the spy-glasses soon revealed the "blue-coats" at the guns. Only for a short time, however. The Confederates regained their position, General Polk having in person, at the head of his reinforcements, decided the fate of the day in favor of the Confederates, forcing General Grant to retire, leaving his wounded on the field. No sooner had our boat rounded to at the Columbus wharf, than an officer of General Polk's staff jumped on board, with orders that the boat proceed, without an instant's delay, to the opposite (Belmont) side of the river. There was no time for any one to disembark, and I found myself, in a few moments, in the midst of the horrors of war. The boat was needed to transport the prisoners, the dying, and the dead. And what a procession it was! So little in unison with the golden glow of the setting sun that bathed every near and distant object in a soft and tender light! Prisoners, mostly Germans, looking sulky; wounded of both armies, meeting the same treatment, and bearing their sufferings with the same stoicism; and, lastly, the dead Confederates, about thirty in number—those few who had friends to care for their mortal remains. Down they came, one by one, wrapped each in his blanket, and laid side by side, with their faces uncovered. I had always heard that persons dying from gunshot wounds bore peaceful expressions; but of that whole group, I saw only one young man whose face I can even now recall with anything but terror. He looked as if he might indeed be sleeping his last sleep, while the others were disfigured and distorted by the

passions of the last moment, and one man had his hand raised and clenched as if defying death itself. The whole scene was like some terrible nightmare. I seemed to be in a dream from which I could not awake till I found myself at General Polk's headquarters — a large frame-house entirely deserted and desolate enough, but in harmony with all I had seen and felt. As I was standing on the porch in the gray of the evening, not a light in or about the house, a rapid, irregular firing and shouting announced the return of the victors. Some one advised me to go in, saying, "Victorious troops are always dangerous, and Columbus will be as unsafe as Belmont for the next hour or two." Just at this moment an old black woman appeared and said to me, "There is a gentleman dying in one of the rooms." I went in without a moment's thought or fear, and saw Major Edward Butler,[1] of Louisiana, mortally wounded, but retaining his consciousness and anxious to see General Polk. I sat down beside him. It seemed hours, though really it was not very long, before the general and staff returned full of exultation.

That old house was vivified. It was alive with martial spirit. It needed not the surroundings of ordinary comfort and convenience. It was the most glorious place I ever was in, and lit up with its own fire even the death-bed of that gallant man, who seemed to draw new life from it. His eye flashed with more than mortal brightness. His voice took a new ring, and when General Polk came into the room and bowed his head over that low pallet, the two men seemed to exchange characters: on General Polk's countenance was the pain and suffering; on Major Butler's the triumph, as he said, "General Polk, I want you to bear witness that I died in the line of my duty. I did not recklessly go in advance of my men till it became necessary; and my only regret is, that I cannot live to be of some service to my country." The general was entirely overcome; he could only grasp the hand of the dying man, and say in broken tones, "I will make

[1] He was the son of Colonel E. G. W. Butler, of Louisiana, the godson and ward of General Andrew Jackson.

it my duty to fulfill your wishes; your father shall know all." After a few moments' silence, more eloquent than prayer, he softly left the room, saying to me, with a deep sigh, "Ah! this is the other side of war"; while Major Butler said, "There goes one of the noblest men God ever made." After some hours, during which we had faint hopes that Major Butler might be saved, it became evident that he could last but a few minutes longer, and General Polk was sent for. In the early dawn of the morning he came into the room, stood by the bed, took Major Butler's hand in his own, and, as the spirit winged its flight, raised his hand and invoked the blessing of Almighty God on that departing soul. There were some men in that room who had never before been impressed with the reality of a blessing, and who told me afterward they could never forget the power that seemed to emanate from the presence and words of the general. From that moment I never had any doubts as to the bishop-general being the right man in the right place. I dwell the more on this episode, and all it taught me and others, because to many the only vulnerable point in General Polk's whole career was his exchange of the miter for the sword, and because I would hope to show how, in his life, he was as conscientiously true to the one as to the other. To my mind he elevated both.

The next incident I remember was going on a steamer, under a flag of truce, to make arrangements for the exchange of prisoners,—a trip suggested by the general, who, in the midst of the many duties and excitements following a successful battle, found time to think that a change of scene would be grateful to me after the terrible sights of the day before; and he said, "You must go on the boat and see that your Yankee friends get good terms." It was one of General Polk's characteristics that he carried no personal feelings into the war. He was actuated solely by a sense of duty, and used, while in Columbus, to meet the United States officers under flags of truce, and, if report spoke truly, forget for the time that they were enemies. I remember a captious article in a Memphis paper on such an interview, and the general's

remark when urged to reply to it,—"My whole life must speak for me." He had more unconscious grandeur of thought and action than almost any person I ever met; more of the tone that gives luster to character, like the enamel entering into the creation of the potter's hand, and imparting to the original substance and its accidental coloring a new value and brilliancy.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER II.

In the preceding chapter it is stated that when General Johnston took command in the West, General Polk was especially entrusted with the defense of the Mississippi River, and that for a time he was also charged with the defenses of the Tennessee and the Cumberland. After the fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, General Johnston requested him to furnish a report of his connection with that work. In compliance with this request, General Polk wrote:

HEADQUARTERS, FIRST CORPS, ARMY OF THE MISSISSIPPI,
CORINTH, MISS., April 1, 1862.

General: In conformity with your order to report to you on the defenses of the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers at the time of my taking command in the West, I have to say that those defenses were at the time not included in my command, nor were they until after you assumed charge of the Western Department. My command, up to that time, was limited on the north and east by the Tennessee River.

Shortly after you took command of the Western Department, Lieutenant Dixon, of the Corps of Engineers, was instructed by you to make an examination of the works at Forts Henry and Donelson, and to report upon them. These instructions were complied with, and he reported that the former fort, which was nearly completed, was built not at the most favorable position, but that it was a strong work; and instead of abandoning it and building at another place, he advised that it should be completed, and the other works constructed on the highlands just above the fort on the opposite side of the river. Measures for the accomplishment of this work were adopted as the means at our disposal would allow. A negro force, offered by the planters on the Tennessee in North Alabama, was employed on the work, and efforts were made to push it to completion as fast as the means at command would allow. Lieutenant Dixon also made a similar reconnaissance on the Cumberland, and gave it as his opinion that although a better position might have been chosen for the fortifications of the river, yet, under the circumstances then surrounding our command, it would be better to retain and strengthen the

position chosen. He accordingly made surveys for additional outworks, and the service of a considerable slave force was obtained to construct them. This work was continued and kept under the supervision of Lieutenant Dixon. Lieutenant Dixon also advised the placing of obstructions in the Cumberland at a certain point below, where there was shoal water, so as to afford protection to the operatives engaged on the fortifications against the enemy's gunboats. This was done, and it operated as a check to the navigation so long as the water continued low.

You are aware that efforts were made to obtain heavy ordnance to arm these forts; but as we had to rely on supplies from the Atlantic seacoast they came slowly, and it became necessary to divert a number of pieces intended for Columbus to the service of those forts.

The principal difficulty in the way of a successful defense of the rivers in question was the want of an adequate force,— a force of infantry and a force of experienced artillerists. They were applied for by you, and also by me; and the appeal was made earnestly to every quarter whence relief might be hoped for. Why it was not furnished, others must say. I believe the chief reason, so far as infantry was concerned, was the want of arms. As to experienced artillerists, they were not in the country, or, at least, to be spared from other points.

When General Tilghman was made a brigadier-general, he was assigned by you to the command of the defenses on the Tennessee and Cumberland. It was at the time when the operations of the enemy had begun to be active on those rivers, and the difficulty of communicating as rapidly as the exigencies of the service required, through the circuitous route to Columbus, made it expedient for him to place himself in direct communication with the general headquarters.

Nevertheless, all the support I could give him, in answer to his calls, was afforded.

He received from Columbus a detachment of artillery officers, as instructors of his troops in that arm, on two several occasions, and all the infantry at my command that could be spared from the defenses of Columbus.

The importance of gunboats as an element of power in our military operations was frequently brought to the attention of the government.

One transport boat, the "Eastport," was ordered to be purchased and converted into a gunboat on the Tennessee River; but it was, unfortunately, too late to be of any service.

Respectfully your obedient servant,

L. POLK,

Major-General Commanding.

TO GENERAL A. S. JOHNSTON, Commanding Army of the Mississippi, Corinth, Miss.

CHAPTER III.

COLUMBUS.

JANUARY TO MARCH, 1862.

Columbus after the battle of Belmont.— Efforts of Johnston and Polk to obtain reinforcements.— General Polk to Mr. Davis on operations in Missouri.— General Polk sends batteries to General Price and regiments to General Johnston.— General Polk's appeal to Governor Pettus of Mississippi and to the authorities of Tennessee.— General Polk again urges the acceptance of his resignation.— Arrival of General Beauregard.— State of General Beauregard's health.— Generals Polk, Stewart, Halleck, Cullom, and Admiral Foote's views as to the strength of Columbus. — General Beauregard entertains a different opinion.— Evacuation of Columbus ordered.— General Polk wishes to hold it.— Letters to Mrs. Polk.—Extract from official report.

The winter at Columbus was one of watchful suspense. The Union troops, as predicted by General Polk, intended to make their next important movement at some point in the West, with a view of opening the Mississippi River.

With an extensive frontier to defend, and an adequate force at no single point, it may be readily conceived that throughout the line there was an anxious feeling. General Johnston made every appeal in his power, both to Confederate and State authorities, for aid. General Polk, on his part, in harmony with Johnston's views, spared no effort, official or individual, to arouse the national and local authorities to a sense of the importance of successfully meeting the anticipated advance. At his request General Alcorn went to Jackson to see

Governor Pettus of Mississippi; General Cheatham to Nashville to confer with Governor Harris of Tennessee; and Mr. N. R. Jennings to Richmond, on a mission to President Davis. Each of these delegates carried information of the expected movement, and each was instructed to urge the sending of reinforcements and to say that it was of the utmost importance that the South should put forward its strength at once in Kentucky. In the meanwhile General Polk continued his efforts to make Columbus a stronghold, and was doing all that was possible, with the limited means at his disposal, to put Island No. 10, New Madrid (in connection with the island), and Fort Pillow in a state of defense.

Solicitous to have the Federals in Missouri held in check by the Confederate forces there, in order to keep them from the left flank of his own line, General Polk also sent a messenger to Price and McCullough to know their plans and the state of their forces. On January 3, 1862, he wrote to President Davis:

I gave General Price to understand that I regarded energetic action on his part, in keeping the enemy employed in Missouri, of the highest importance to the defense of my present position, and that I hoped he would leave no effort unmade to keep himself in the field during the winter. In my letter to him I expressed the opinion that if the Confederate Government could help Missouri from the east, it must be through Columbus, and I was not without hope of yet aiding in the emancipation of St. Louis through this route.

So long as the Federal forces under Halleck are kept employed by Price in Missouri, they cannot coöperate with Buell against Johnston, nor be concentrated against me on my right or left flank. I hope, therefore, we shall not fail to occupy him fully with all the resources at our command. I have sent General Price several batteries; troops I have none to spare.

In response to a call for men from General Johnston, General Polk wrote on December 30:

I have sent forward to you all of the infantry of Bowen's command, as also Reynolds's and Campbell's regiments. I have also ordered forward Hudson's and Beltzhoover's batteries. These, I suppose (for it has been very difficult to get accurate returns), would make the force about 5000; I wish I could make it 10,000.

I am informed General McCullough's force in Arkansas is 10,000 strong, and is in winter quarters. It is certain now that no movement will be made by the enemy in southwestern Missouri until spring. I beg leave respectfully to submit that in that case this force might, with great—very great—advantage, be employed in southeastern Missouri during the emergency immediately before us, and therefore ask that it may be ordered to the defense of New Madrid and the region round about. The forces there have all disbanded, and I have no reason to hope they can again be enlisted in any short time. This leaves me to provide force for the defense of New Madrid, and my resources for that purpose are very limited. I have had a fort constructed there, and armed it strongly with heavy guns. I have placed for its defense two Arkansas regiments under Colonel Gantt, and these imperfectly armed; but that side of the river should have a much stronger force, and I know not where it is to come from, if not from McCullough's force.

General Johnston fully appreciated the importance of bringing McCullough's force over to the Mississippi River at New Madrid, and he applied for half of it; but a threatened movement of Federals from southwest Missouri seemed to require that all of it should be left to protect Arkansas. If 10,000 men, or even 5000, could have been placed at New Madrid, and a like force brought up from the Gulf coast, where it was not then needed, it is permissible to believe that the disasters so soon to fall

upon the Kentucky line might have been avoided. But the influence of individual States (in accord with an exaggerated application of the doctrine of "State rights") hampered the general government by insisting, in answer to local clamor, upon the retention of troops at points in no way vital to the common cause. For this reason concentration was prevented. The error was soon realized, but it was then too late to rectify it.

In the autumn of 1861 Major-General Halleck was assigned to the command of the Federal armies in the West, and under his direction, with the special supervision of Mr. Lincoln, the greatest efforts were made to open in the coming spring an active campaign on both sides of the Mississippi. In southwest Missouri a column under General Curtis was gathering to move into Arkansas; at St. Louis and Cairo two others were forming—one under General Grant, another under General Pope—to operate down the Mississippi, or the Tennessee and Cumberland, as future developments might prove best. General Buell at the same time was organizing his forces for a movement upon General Hardee at Bowling Green, and upon Crittenden in the eastern part of the State. The first of these operations Buell himself directed; the second he committed to General George H. Thomas. By the middle of February these several corps, aggregating hardly less than 100,000 men, were ready for the march. To oppose them, General Johnston mustered about 55,000 in all at the several points upon his widely extended line.

General Polk had organized an efficient secret service which kept him informed of the preparations in his front, and in a series of letters laid his information before the proper officials. On January 12 he wrote to President Davis:

His flotilla is composed of the gunboats, mortar-boats, and transports enumerated in the accompanying slip; this is taken from one of their own publications, and verified substantially by other information. This flotilla is to be supported by a land force; of the number composing this force we have no certain information, but we have reason to believe it will reach from 30,000 to 50,000. Since taking possession of this place in September, I have been actively engaged in putting it into as complete a condition of defense as the means at my disposal would allow. These means have been far less than I desired. The work, however, is one of decided strength, and it will offer a stern resistance to any attack that may be made upon it. I regret to say that my force is much below what is required for the work before it. Within the last fortnight, under a call from General Johnston, I felt obliged to send him between 4000 and 5000 men, which I could not well spare. *I have called upon the governors of the States below us for aid. The aid has not been furnished as the necessities of my position demand. We shall, however, make the best defense our circumstances will allow.*

Of the character of these defenses no one was better fitted to speak than General A. P. Stewart, who commanded the river batteries. In a letter to the writer he says:

On the occupation of Columbus, where General Polk assumed command in person, he applied himself diligently to preparations for defense. Extensive works were constructed on the bluff and ridge above the town, numerous batteries lined the river-bank at the foot of the bluff, the approaches from below were guarded by defensive works, and the channel of the river protected by a system of torpedoes. A force was camped across the river to clear away the timber from the west bank, in order to expose the ground to the fire from the forts and batteries. The wisdom of this precaution was demonstrated on the 7th of November, the day on which the battle of Belmont occurred. During the winter,

preparations for defense were continued. Magazines were constructed and stored with ammunition, storehouses filled with provisions, the works were improved and extended, the troops drilled, every practicable means adopted to render the place as strong as possible and capable of standing a siege or assault by any force the enemy could bring against it.

In a letter written early in January General Polk expresses himself as pleased with the condition of the works at Columbus:

> We are still quiet here. I am employed in making more and more difficult the task to take this place, and feel I am, in a good measure, accomplishing it. I have now, mounted and in position, all round my works, 140 cannon of various calibers, and they look not a little formidable. Besides this I am paving the bottom of the river with submarine batteries, to say nothing of a heavy chain across the river. I am planting mines out in the roads also, so that if they make their appearance, we will not fail to give them a warm reception.

Early in January General Halleck reached the conclusion that the special object for which General Polk labored had been accomplished, for he wrote General McClellan on January 20:

"Columbus cannot be taken without an immense siege-train and a terrible loss of life. I have thoroughly studied its defenses; they are very strong. But it can be turned, paralyzed, and forced to surrender."[1]

In accordance with the idea suggested in this dispatch a movement upon Forts Henry and Donelson was decided upon. It was to cover his preparations for this advance that General Halleck, on January 6, directed General Grant to make a demonstration against Columbus. Gen-

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. viii, p. 509.

eral Buell at the same time was requested to aid by a simultaneous advance toward Bowling Green. On January 14 Grant moved from Cairo to the Kentucky shore with a force of 8000 men, and at the same time pushed out from Paducah a column of 5000. Advancing the main body to within fifteen miles of Columbus, he halted and sent out reconnoitering parties. Some such movement had been considered a possibility as part of the spring campaign, and in December Johnston had suggested to Polk that, in case the enemy should attempt to penetrate into Tennessee by passing between Columbus and the Tennessee River, he might withdraw from his post force enough to oppose their march. Subsequently, however, to meet the threatened movement upon Bowling Green, he had withdrawn 5000 men from Polk; these, as has been said, were sent about two weeks before Grant's movement. This left Polk but 12,800 men, and he saw that even if Grant continued his march toward Tennessee as had been suggested, the necessity of keeping a good garrison in the works at Columbus, to meet any sudden descent of the large flotilla then at Cairo, would leave him too small a force to do more than operate on the enemy's flank and rear. He sent out his cavalry with two regiments of infantry as a force of observation, and waited for further developments of the enemy's design.

Pending these developments, he wrote to Johnston, January 17:

> In view of the paramount importance of holding this position, which is the key to the whole Mississippi Valley, it has appeared to me that my first duty was to make everything bend to the accomplishment of that object. This will require me to take no risk that may involve its loss.
>
> In view, then, of the smallness of my force, I see nothing

left me but to strengthen my position and await his coming, making only such diversions as may be attempted with safety, and throwing the responsibility of taking care of such force as we cannot dispose of on the War Department and the people of the States around us generally. It is an alternative I should gladly have avoided, but the inadequacy of the force at my disposal leaves me none other. The soundness of the position in my judgment cannot be disputed, especially as I have provisions enough in store within my lines to last a force of 25,000 men 120 days. *I have resolved, therefore, to stand a siege, and look to the general government for such aid as the War Department and the country may afford me.*

The enemy, however, soon satisfied with the demonstration, withdrew to their original positions in order to complete the preparations for the advance upon the real objective points, Forts Henry and Donelson.

General Polk now made a second attempt to resign from the army. He had never ceased to hope for the time when he might retire, and, learning that General Beauregard had been ordered to Columbus, he wrote President Davis, presenting his resignation. The following was written to his wife, on January 31:

It is very cold here,—the weather bad, and all military operations stopped. You see Beauregard has been ordered here; that suits me very well, as it will furnish the ground of my insisting on Davis's allowing me now to retire, which I have done by letter by Hamilton and sent it to Richmond. *But this is a secret.* I presume he cannot now decline. I am resolutely prepared to do my duty, whatever may be the result; with God's blessing, I hope I shall be faithful to whatever issue awaits me.

Mr. Davis declined to accept the resignation. Fort Henry had fallen, and Fort Donelson was closely invested, and now, more than ever, every man was needed.

In the face of disaster General Polk could not withdraw; the reasons which impelled him to enter the army at the beginning of the conflict were now even more pressing. He therefore again accepted the President's refusal, and moved on in the discharge of duties he had hoped to resign into the hands of the distinguished officer the government had sent to his aid. Here is a letter to Mrs. Polk, begun on February 15, in which he tells something of his plan to coöperate in the defense of Fort Donelson:

I see they have had hard fighting at Fort Donelson the last four days, and that our troops have held their own thus far very decisively. This is cause of great congratulation certainly, and I hope Johnston may be able to give that column all the aid it needs. I send out toward Paducah to-morrow a strong column under the direction of General Cheatham, for the purpose of checking reinforcements to the enemy at Donelson. The weather is wretched for such a march, and the roads worse; but it is necessary, and must be done. I shall also make a demonstration on Bird's Point.

Sunday, 16th. I have just received a dispatch from General Johnston instructing me to withhold the movement on Paducah. General Beauregard is expected to-morrow; he is unwell at Jackson. His staff is here. I have thus far fulfilled my mission, by general consent, which was to hold the Mississippi River against all comers. I have strongly fortified my position so as to make the enemy stand at a respectful distance. I am now ready to turn over my stewardship to General Beauregard, and hope he may take good care of it in the future as I have in the past. I shall, of course, give him my frank and most generous support.

In the latter part of January General Beauregard had been ordered to report to General Johnston for assignment to duty at Columbus. He arrived at Jackson, Tenn., about the middle of February, but, being too ill

to proceed to Columbus, he requested General Polk to visit him at Jackson. The fall of Forts Henry and Donelson, and the declared purpose of the Federals to push their forces up the Tennessee River, thus turning Columbus on the right, made the further occupation of the position a serious question. General Beauregard had sent his chief of staff, Colonel Jordan, and his engineer officer, Captain Harris, to Columbus, and they had made such reports to him concerning the nature of the works that he was inclined to doubt their efficiency. This, together with the necessity he was under to gather as large a force as possible with which to meet the enemy's movement up the Tennessee, seemed to convince him that Columbus should be evacuated and the defense of the river made at Island No. 10 and Fort Pillow. These points he considered not only more defensible than Columbus, but defensible with a smaller force, which would enable him to take, for field operations, a part of the command then holding the river, to use in conjunction with the troops he was gathering along the line of the Memphis & Charleston Railroad. When, in the conference at Jackson, General Beauregard unfolded these views to General Polk, Polk was not disposed to yield a ready assent to all of them. He recognized the necessity for gathering a force for field operations.[1] It was indeed exactly what he and every other prominent officer in the department had for six months been urging upon the authorities. He, however, questioned the advisability, even for this purpose, of giving up Columbus. The works had been accepted and approved by Colonel Gilmer, the chief engineer of the department, an officer

[1] For abstract of monthly return of Polk's force, January and February, 1862, see "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. vii, pp. 853, 912.

who subsequently became the head of the Corps of Engineers in the Confederacy; and they also met with the approval of General Johnston. General Beauregard himself was, it is true, an able engineer; it was that very fact which had caused the government to order him to Columbus to take charge of the work hitherto consigned to Polk; but Beauregard had neither been to Columbus, nor had he seen the works. He was a sick man relying upon the judgment of others, and Polk, looking to Beauregard himself, was reluctant to accept the opinions of his staff officers as final upon so vital a question, and he held this opinion, even though ready to accord proper weight to the judgment and experience of the officers in question. In spite of any strategical fault which might be committed in an attempt to hold it, and with a full recognition of the possibility of ultimate capture, Polk urged upon Beauregard that, just at that time, the moral effect of a determined stand at Columbus would be of great service to the Confederate arms. Admitting the correctness of some of the criticisms passed upon the works, there was yet time to correct the alleged serious defects. In fact, he maintained that the labor and time needed to transfer the guns and stores and put the former into position at Island No. 10 would be greater than that needed for the proposed alteration.[1] As to the force that would be

1 The objection raised was chiefly against a portion of the works provided for defense upon the land side. A criticism based upon the presence of wooden warehouses inside the forts was founded upon a misconception of the actual condition present.

There were ample earth-covered magazines within the fort for the storing of all supplies needed for a siege. The buildings in question had been erected for temporary use early in the occupation, and had been continued merely because they afforded a convenient depot for all the troops on the heights. There was no intention to keep them as permanent depots, and in twenty-four hours all could have been demolished.

needed, General Polk was willing to undertake to hold Columbus with six or seven thousand men, or with even a smaller number, if General Beauregard would consent, —counting, of course, upon the ability of that officer to give some occupation to the enemy, then on the Tennessee River in his rear.

Writing to a member of his family from Jackson, on February 16, he said: "As I was the first of our general officers to enter Kentucky, it seems as if I am to be the last to leave it. I went there to stay, and I feel it my duty to do what I went for."

It is more than probable that General Polk's attitude upon this question caused General Beauregard to present to the government the alternative of attempting to hold Columbus with a reduced garrison. Be that as it may, on February 18 he sent General Cooper the following dispatch:

(Confidential.)

JACKSON, TENN., February 18, 1862.

Columbus with present defensive resources must meet the fate of Fort Donelson with the loss of the entire army, as all ways of retreat by rail or river can be cut off by the enemy's superior force from Tennessee River—a hazard contrary to the art of war. Therefore should now decide whether to hold Columbus to the last extremity, with its garrison [say thirty-five hundred (3500) men], withdrawing other forces for subsequent use; or the evacuation of the place, and new defensive position taken. My health is too feeble to authorize me to assume command, but I shall advise with General Polk.

[Signed] G. T. BEAUREGARD.

GENERAL SAMUEL COOPER, ADJUTANT-GENERAL,
RICHMOND, VA.

It is idle to speculate now upon the advantages or disadvantages resulting from the abandonment of Colum-

bus, and the subject would not be touched upon here were it not that General Beauregard, without ever making a personal inspection of the position, committed his judgment to others, and upon their report assumed it to be indefensible and condemned it in favor of Island No. 10. It is sometimes a wise thing to take into consideration our enemy's estimate of our positions. This was the main key to General Grant's success, for he never lent ear to his own fears without intuitively balancing them with what he felt must be those of his opponent. Columbus, in the exaggerated language then prevalent in that section, had been dubbed by the enemy the "Gibraltar of the West." General Halleck, whose words have already been quoted, wrote on the 20th of January: "Columbus cannot be taken without an immense siege-train and a terrible loss of life. I have thoroughly studied its defenses; they are very strong." In confirmation of this opinion General Cullom, his chief of staff and an accomplished engineer, wrote after the evacuation had been made:

"Though rising from a sick-bed to go upon the expedition, I could not resist landing to examine the works, which are of *immense strength*, consisting of tier upon tier of batteries on the river front, and a strong parapet and ditch covered by a thick abattis on the land side." [1]

Admiral Foote, who was conducting the naval expedition, wrote on the same date:

"The works are of very great strength, consisting of formidable tiers of batteries on the water side, and on the land side surrounded by a ditch and abattis." [2]

Such, in fact, was the enemy's estimate of the strength of Columbus that they had no intention of attempting

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. vii, p. 437.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 436.

then to reduce it by a direct attack. Having turned it on the right by way of the Tennessee, they were at the time of the evacuation moving to turn it on the left by way of New Madrid. They quickly captured this point, and in so doing placed Island No. 10, the point occupied in place of Columbus, in precisely the same position in which they intended to place the latter position. But there was a difference: Columbus was prepared for just such an emergency, the enemy were afraid of it, and its garrison had confidence in it; whereas the new line had to be hastily occupied and armed, all in the face of an advancing and thoroughly prepared enemy. Herein lies the chief cause of the poor showing which the Confederate forces made in the operations at Island No. 10 and New Madrid, as well as for the complaints of unreadiness on that line which General Beauregard's biographer felt called upon to make.

The 7000 men drawn from Columbus held Island No. 10 about one month. The same force could have done as well — and better — at Columbus. Those who were then on the Mississippi, and who took part in the defense, could plainly see that the effect of the evacuation upon the Confederate troops was disheartening, and to this extent demoralizing. There appeared to be a feeling among the men that if they could not make a successful stand in a position upon which they had spent so much time and labor, and upon which they had come to rely even to the extent of a willingness to withstand a siege in it, there was small chance of their being able to acquit themselves creditably in this hastily assumed position. As nothing could have happened at Columbus which could have been worse than the fate which soon overtook them at Island No. 10, many of these men always regretted that the issue had not been tried

as General Polk had intended to make it. Retreat and disaster seemed the order of the day everywhere; but this would have been one bold stand in the midst of the ruins of Johnston's line—an example of much importance just then, when every effort was needed to inspire the people and collect a force with which to meet the victorious Federal armies. Good or bad, Columbus should have been held.

General Polk assented to Beauregard's plan, but not until he had returned to Columbus, and then—from all that can be gathered—more through the desire to render his commander an effective and hearty support than from a conviction of the correctness of all that commander's views. Beauregard's statement that Polk consented to the evacuation because he was convinced by Beauregard and his officers of the weakness of the works, is an error, and is disproved by what Polk wrote to the President of the Confederacy on the 11th of March. In speaking of the evacuation Polk said: "I had been there [Columbus] just six months, had a small force always under my command, had made the post well-nigh impregnable, a solid barrier, shutting out the enemy from the Mississippi Valley by the river."

The necessity compelling its abandonment was a trying one, but Polk uttered no criticism; on the contrary, he went on to describe what was being done to offset the loss of Columbus in words that showed a frank support of all that his superior ordered. On the 20th of February he received orders to evacuate the position. The manner of its accomplishment is given in the following letter and in his official report. Writing to Mrs. Polk on the 2d of March, he says:

> This is my last day and hour in Columbus; the evacuation has been complete, and all are gone except myself and staff.

Never was anything done with greater celerity, or so completely; for we left virtually nothing to our enemy but the works. Those I sadly regret.

Columbus has filled the measure of its mission. It commanded and protected the valley of the Mississippi; we would have continued there with our small garrison had the center and right wing been able to stand.

It was a military necessity which brought me here; it is a military necessity which takes me away. I leave under the exactions of necessity and the orders of the Secretary of War.

And his official report says:

In five days we moved the accumulations of six months, taking with us all our commissary and quartermaster stores, an amount sufficient to supply my whole command for eight months, all our powder and other ammunition and ordnance stores (excepting a few shot and gun-carriages), and every heavy gun in the forts. Two 32-pounders in a remote earth work were the only available guns left, and these, with three or four small and indifferent carronades similarly situated, were spiked and rendered useless.

The whole number of pieces of artillery comprising our armament was one hundred and forty.[1]

With the evacuation of Columbus,[2] General Polk's connection with the river defenses virtually ceased, but, owing to General Beauregard's continued illness, reports

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. vii, p. 437.

[2] The evacuation of Columbus was, in fact, the most successfully conducted evacuation of so extensively fortified a position made during the Civil War. It is true the enemy was not in front of the works, but their gunboats were so placed as easily to command them. This, together with the proximity of General Pope's force, then moving to the attack on New Madrid, made rapid action a necessity. The work was not only rapid, but thorough. This is shown, not only by the official report, but by the fact that the critics in our own lines — who, just then, were very active — could pick no flaw. The ordnance stores, torpedoes, and anchors reported by the enemy as found in the works were insignificant in quantity, and all save the few anchors were too badly damaged to warrant removal.

were made to him from time to time as to the condition of affairs on the river. These were transmitted to department headquarters, and such suggestions as were received were transmitted to General McCown at Madrid Bend. General Polk's plan, as we have seen, had been to make three lines of defense: Columbus, Island No. 10, and Fort Pillow. Columbus was given up; the other two remained. Both were strong positions. For contending with gunboats the hills at Fort Pillow rendered the fire of the guns more effective, while the isolation of Island No. 10 was thought to render it easier of defense with a small force. Each had its special advantages. Captain Grey, of the Engineer Corps, had charge of the construction of works at the Island. Captain Montgomery Lynch was the ranking engineer at Fort Pillow. Both of these officers were most faithful in the discharge of their duties, and did everything that the resources at their disposal permitted. All of the guns being needed at Columbus, or on the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers, but few were in position, either upon the Island or at Fort Pillow, until after the evacuation of Columbus. But as early as November 30 Captain Lynch reported the work under his charge as about completed, and said that he considered it, with its complement of guns, a very strong position.

The defense of the river was entrusted to General McCown, aided by General A. P. Stewart and General Marshall Walker. All these officers had been educated at West Point, and all, excepting Stewart, had recently been officers in the army of the United States. McCown had served in the artillery, and, being the only general officer of the division having any such special training, he was chosen to conduct the defenses at Island No. 10 and New Madrid. On February 27 he occupied those

places with his command. The works at New Madrid—a well-constructed fort and some field-works—being sufficient for the force detailed to hold that post, McCown devoted himself principally to the works at Island No. 10, so that by March 10, the day the enemy began the bombardment, he had fifty-two heavy guns in position, with a force at his disposal numbering about 8000 men. The story of the defense and capture of these posts is beyond the scope of this work, however, as General Polk no longer had any connection with them.

During the winter of 1860–61 General Polk's family had been living in Nashville. But the retreat of the Confederate forces from Bowling Green induced them to anticipate the evacuation of Nashville by removing to New Orleans, their old home. His letters to Mrs. Polk allude to that subject, and at the same time enable us to follow his own movements. On the 10th of March he writes:

Now that you have decided on something definite for yourself and the family, my mind is easy, and is the more so because I think that New Orleans, as I have said, is the very best place in the whole land for you. There is but one thing I wish you to do, and that is to be most rigidly economical. You know the means of living that you have, and must, all of you, live accordingly. You can set a good example in that respect to our people, and so be doing a high religious duty. If I can in any way help you by sending you anything, let me know.

Beauregard has at last assumed command, and, as you may suppose, it has lightened my burden. I enclose a copy of his address. He has divided his army, which he calls the Army of the Mississippi, into two grand divisions—the first under my command, the second under command of General Bragg. We have been together in Jackson for a number of days, arranging a program for our approaching campaign.

Bragg's army is coming up from Pensacola, and we are hoping to have Johnston's from Middle Tennessee to join us. If you look on the map, you will see the shortest line from the Tennessee River to Memphis is from about Savannah. It is at that point the enemy is landing his army, which he took up some days ago in sixty transports. I think there will be an effort on the part of the enemy to pass from Savannah to Memphis — which will, of course, be opposed, and must bring on a collision in less than ten days. The point at which we are concentrating is near Bethel, on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad. We are all in good spirits, and feel confident of the final issue. The enemy has just now begun to enter upon the really serious difficulties attendant upon an effort at conquest. He is leaving his own country and entering upon ours.

Meek is at New Madrid. He is engaged in holding the river against the descending Yankee army. It is the present point of interest in the West. They were fighting there all day yesterday, though with small loss on our side as yet. My medical director, Dr. Bell, I am sorry to say, had both legs shot off below the knee. Write us at Jackson.

On the 14th of March he writes from Humboldt:

Here I am, a second time about the last man left in my present encampment. My command has all gone before me to Bethel and Corinth, and I am attending to the closing of the few things left. I have been here since the evacuation of Columbus. We have assorted and sent forward to the homes of the soldiers and officers all extra baggage; have cut down everything to the standard of "future wants," and are now ready to take the field for the spring campaign.

The enemy has gone up in large force to Pittsburg and Eastport, and we are concentrating to meet him in front of one or the other as he shall choose. My command, General Bragg's, and General Johnston's will concentrate for that purpose, and I think we are likely to be allowed to get ready for him before he makes his appearance. There is a feeling

of confident expectation that he cannot succeed in that collision, but must fail signally. It is our business, under God, to see that he does so.

Meck has been under very heavy fire at New Madrid, and has escaped; but he escaped, I hear, narrowly. I have not heard many particulars, but have no doubt the boy did his duty. He is a fine fellow. He has gone with his command down to Fort Pillow, the army which was at Madrid having retired thither. You will be pleased to hear we are holding our own at Island No. 10 and Madrid Bend. That place has been strongly fortified. They have been shelling it for the last three days, but have made no impression whatever upon it. I do not believe they can carry it with the gunboats alone, and for the present they can use nothing else. For myself I do not feel downhearted in the least. I think there will be a way found by which we can carry our point.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BATTLES OF SHILOH AND CORINTH.

MARCH TO JUNE, 1862.

General Beauregard officially assumes command of First Division of the Western Department, March 5, 1862.—Troops now sent from the South.—Murmurings of the soldiers at the delay.—Confederates concentrate at Corinth.—General Bragg's double office.—Faulty assignment of the troops.—Forces at Shiloh.—Delays.—Positions of the opposing forces.—Tardiness of General Bragg's corps.—Cheatham's rapid advance.—Faulty arrangement of troops in the line of battle.—Confederate council of war before Shiloh.—General Beauregard wishes to retire the army.—General Johnston and General Polk oppose it.—General Johnston's estimate of General Polk.—General Polk's official report of the battle.—Death of Albert Sidney Johnston.—General Beauregard's order to retire.—The charge of Cheatham's division.—General Bragg's estimate of General Beauregard.—Letter to Mrs. Polk describing Shiloh.—Corinth.—The Confederate army at Tupelo.

On the 5th of March, 1862, General Beauregard formally assumed command of the First Division of the Western Department. He placed General Polk in command of the forces that had been withdrawn from the river defenses, ordering him to take a position temporarily at Humboldt. Meanwhile, the reinforcements that Generals Johnston and Polk had vainly begged for all winter began to arrive, the men being withdrawn from the southern coast defenses, where, for months, there had been no real need for their presence. By the middle of March 23,000 of these troops had arrived,

drawn chiefly from Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans. Their coming at this late date gave food for bitter comments as to the indifference or incompetency of some of the directing powers.

"Why," said the troops already on the line, "could not this help have come in January? Have we not been begging for it, pleading for it — have not the very disasters that have befallen us been foretold as certain to come in the absence of the very troops now at hand? Has anything of real importance occurred where these soldiers have been posted, to keep them so long from us?"[1]

These and other questions were forced upon the men, who, in addition to their misfortunes, now found themselves the targets for the ready abuse that was rained upon them from all sides. The position of the general officers was doubly trying, because they could offer no explanation that would not reflect upon the authorities. Their only course was silence, and this they carefully maintained.

General Bragg was placed in command of the newly arrived troops and was ordered to concentrate them about Corinth. The occupation of this place was an evident and absolute necessity, as it was the most important railroad center in the department, and from its proximity to the Tennessee River was exposed to easy capture.

By the 25th of March General Johnston succeeded in placing at this point the forces he had brought out of Kentucky, leaving a division under Breckinridge near

1 There is abundant reason to believe that the fault lay at the door of the State governments rather than at that of the general government, each State clamoring for troops to protect what it regarded as its particularly exposed point.

Burnsville, to the east of Corinth, to watch the enemy's left flank. In the meantime the Federal army had taken up a position at Pittsburg Landing and the town of Savannah on the Tennessee River. The obvious intention of the enemy to concentrate in front of Corinth induced Beauregard to order Polk to unite with the main army at that point. He was instructed, however, to leave one of his divisions, under General Cheatham, at Bethel Station on the Mobile & Ohio Railroad, some twenty-four miles north of Corinth. This was rendered necessary by some attempts that had been made by a division of the Federal army to destroy the railroad at that point. At the same time General Cheatham's command, while so posted, was in the best position from which to watch the enemy's right flank. These instructions were executed at about the same time that General Johnston reached Corinth. All the Confederate forces of the department except those upon the Mississippi River were thus, in the last week of March, assembled at and about Corinth. The accumulations of commissary, quartermaster's, and ordnance stores and field transportation, made during the winter by Polk's foresight and activity, were now distributed to the entire army wherever needed, and thus proved most timely and acceptable, for many of the newly arrived commands were sorely in want.

The army was now thrown into four corps, and styled "The Army of Mississippi." General Johnston was announced as commander-in-chief, and General Beauregard as second in command, the latter being charged especially with all matters of organization and discipline, together with the preparation of the details of the intended movement against the enemy. General Bragg was made chief of the staff of the army. The combina-

tion, in their respective positions, of these three men, gave to this army perhaps the strongest leadership that could have been found for it within the limits of the Confederacy. But the strength of the combination lay in maintaining the relative positions of its component parts. Had that been possible, a brilliant career would have been assured the Army of Mississippi. But it was not possible. The head was soon cut off, and first one and then the other member essayed to take his place. Each in turn failed, while that splendid army gave its best and most loyal efforts to sustain them. There is not a sadder story of this war than the history of this army, struggling heroically, not only to overcome its enemies, but to bear up under the misfortunes of its leadership, which, beginning amidst the terrible sacrifice at Shiloh, for nearly two years hung over it, ruled it, and finally crushed it at Missionary Ridge.

The four corps were assigned respectively to Polk, Bragg, Hardee, and Breckinridge — General Bragg, in addition to his duties as chief of the staff, undertaking those of a corps commander. The preponderating influence of this distinguished officer at this time was most natural, as it was in keeping with the reputation for gallantry and efficiency which he had so honorably made for himself, during the war with Mexico, and recently in the administration of affairs at Pensacola. He had the confidence of the people second only to General Beauregard. The appearance of his command bore evidence to the masterful manner in which he had organized and drilled it, so when it was learned that he not only assumed the double duty of chief of staff and corps commander, but was to include in his corps more than a third of the army,— double the force assigned to Hardee, and more than double that given to Breckin-

ridge,—every one prepared to accept it, though they might doubt its wisdom. As a fact, it was a clumsy arrangement, and soon proved a serious embarrassment.[1]

On the night of April 2 General Polk received a dispatch from General Cheatham, reporting that Lew Wallace's division of the Federal army had appeared in his front at Bethel Station. This communication he at once sent to General Beauregard. That officer, believing from its contents that the enemy had divided his forces to carry out the expected incursion against Bethel, forwarded the dispatch to General Johnston with the endorsement:

"Now is the moment to advance and strike the enemy at Pittsburg Landing."

Johnston, for several days, had been impatient to advance, and had only been withheld by the necessity of organizing the troops he had gathered about him. That night, therefore, it was determined to move at once, and, if possible, attack the enemy on the morning of the 5th. Orders were accordingly issued to the corps commanders "to hold their troops in hand, ready to advance upon the enemy in the morning by six o'clock" (the 3d).[2] As

[1] There are two statements of the forces engaged at Shiloh. One made by General Beauregard on April 23, 1862, states that—

Polk's effective total was	(4 brigades)	.....	9,136
Bragg's "	" "	(6 brigades)	13,589
Hardee's "	" "	(3 brigades)	6,789
Breckinridge's "	" "	(3 brigades)	6,439

(See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 396.)

On June 30, 1862, General Bragg rendered an elaborate report of the forces engaged at Shiloh, thus:

Polk's effective total	(4 brigades)	.....	9,422
Bragg's "	"	(6 brigades)	15,529
Hardee's "	"	(3 brigades)	4,855
Breckinridge's "		(3 brigades)	6,894

(*Ibid.*, p. 398.)

[2] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 398.

has already been stated, Cheatham's division, containing one half the effective force of Polk's corps, was near Bethel Station, twenty-four miles north from Corinth, watching the enemy. Thus Polk had but one division, consisting of two brigades, some 4500 men all told, to prepare for the march. This was quickly done, and at the appointed hour he reported to General Beauregard through his aide, Lieutenant Richmond, that his command was ready to march. But the larger commands were not in readiness; the preparations of Bragg's command, the largest of all, were, proportionately, least advanced. In consequence of this Polk received orders to remain as he was until further instructed. During the forenoon he was ordered to report at General Beauregard's headquarters. There he met Bragg and Hardee; and General Beauregard communicated to them, orally, the details of the projected movement. Bragg was to press the concentration of his troops at Monterey, while Polk and Hardee were to continue in readiness for the movement as originally ordered for 6 A.M.; these two were to move by the same road, with Hardee in front, and Polk following at the proper interval. It was, it seems, intended that Hardee should begin his march at twelve o'clock, noon, but, owing to some misunderstanding, he did not receive explicit instructions to march until about 3 P.M.

Owing to these delays, Polk's column, although ready since six o'clock that morning, did not clear itself of its encampment much before dark. It camped, however, nine miles from Corinth that night; and the next day moved on close in rear of Hardee's corps.[1]

[1] Referring to "The Military Operations of General Beauregard," by Colonel Roman, we find in vol. i, p. 275, the following statement concerning these events: "At the hour prescribed in the preparatory

The position of the Federal forces at this time was the following: Camped on the west bank of the Tennessee, at Pittsburg Landing, was an army under the command of General Grant. Another army, under General Buell, was moving rapidly through Middle Tennessee to unite with it, and on the day the Confederate army moved out of Corinth the head of this column was nearing Savannah, on the east bank of the Tennessee, eight miles north of Pittsburg Landing. Pittsburg Landing itself was about twenty-five miles northeast of Corinth, and lay between two streams, Owl and Lick creeks, which flowed into the Tennessee River, the one about two miles above the Landing, the other the same distance below. Two and a half miles west of the Landing

circular to the corps commanders, which had been sent out that morning, viz., about ten o'clock, the troops were all under arms in Corinth, apparently ready for the march. Meanwhile, owing to the many more urgent occupations of the adjutant-general's office, copies of the preceding general orders" (Special Orders No. 8) "had not been prepared for distribution that day, as the corps commanders were to begin the march pursuant to the verbal order and instructions which General Beauregard in the presence of General Johnston had given them individually as to the initial movements from Corinth. The march, nevertheless, did not begin at the time directed, chiefly through the misapprehension of the commander of the First Corps, who, instead of moving forward upon the full verbal instructions he had received, held his corps under arms, and with its trains blocked the way of the other troops." The writer then goes on to say that as soon as this unfortunate delay was brought to General Beauregard's knowledge he dispatched an order to the First Corps to clear the way at once, which was done.

The answer to this statement is as follows:

1st. The hour fixed in the preparatory circular (the only one issued) was 6 A.M., not 10 A.M. ("Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. ii, p. 383.)

2d. The verbal instructions were not considered sufficient, because General Bragg, the chief of staff of the army, who was present when they were given, supplemented them by a written order to General Hardee, *who was to lead the advance.* This order specified no hour, but said. "Move as soon as practicable." (*Ibid.*, p. 387.)

3d. The First Corps had nothing to do with the initiation of the advance,

was Shiloh Church, around which most of Grant's army was encamped. Five miles farther west was Mickey's House, which marked the crossing of important roads leading to Corinth. The hamlet of Monterey was situated upon one of these roads about half way between Corinth and the Landing.

The country between Corinth and the river was gently undulating, and, in the main, thickly covered with forest trees and dense undergrowth. The roads were the common country highways, difficult to an army even in dry weather, and apt to become almost impassable to an army after such prolonged rains as now began to fall.

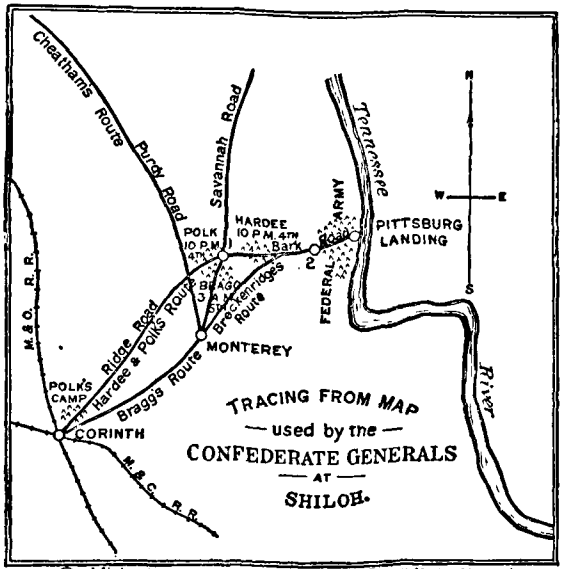
Of the two roads connecting Corinth and the Landing, one passed from the town of Corinth on the north, and, making a gradual curve to the east, ran past Mick-

as that duty was explicitly assigned to the Third Corps, General Hardee. Therefore, had it moved forward "upon the full verbal instructions," it would simply have disarranged the order of march as prescribed in the written instructions (Special Orders No. 8). Its commander had verbal instructions which were in accord with the written instructions, and they directed him to follow, not initiate, the movement. (*Ibid.*, pt. i, p. 393.)

4th. The First Corps did not block the way of the other troops, because but half of the corps (two brigades) was at Corinth, and that half was posted two miles to the north of the town, in fields and open woods; and neither that half nor its trains moved into the road until Hardee's corps had passed their encampment.

Bragg's corps was to be assembled at Monterey, twelve miles northeast from Corinth, and such of his troops as were about Corinth moved out by a road which left the town on the east, while the road upon which the First Corps was camped and marched left the town on the north. The two lines of march being distinctly separate, and neither corps being in the town, it was impossible for one to interfere with the other. (See Special Orders No. 8, "Military Operations of General Beauregard," vol. i, p. 272; or, "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 393.) Breckinridge's command had no relation to the movement out of Corinth, other than to conform to it from the direction of Burnsville. The same statement applies to Cheatham's command, except that its movement was from the direction of Bethel toward Polk's line of march, meeting him many miles out of Corinth.

ey's House to reach its terminus at the river. This was the Bark or Ridge road. The other left Corinth on the east, ran through Monterey, and joined the Ridge road about a mile and a half beyond Mickey's. From this road at Monterey two roads led northward, one to Savannah, the other to Purdy; both of which intersected the Ridge road, the first at Mickey's House, the second some two or three miles nearer Corinth. In this way the two main roads running between the positions of the hostile armies were freely connected throughout their entire length.



The order directing the march specified that Hardee's corps should move by the Ridge or Bark road to the outposts of the enemy, and there form in line of battle. Bragg's corps, after being assembled at Monterey, was

to pass over to the Ridge road — one division by way of the Savannah road, the other by way of that to Purdy. Having reached the Ridge road, the corps was to follow Hardee's movement to within one thousand yards of his position, and there form its line of battle. These two lines were to be so placed as to fill the ground between Owl and Lick creeks, the streams being relied upon principally to cover the flanks of the Confederate army. Breckinridge was directed to concentrate his command at Monterey as soon as Bragg's command was out of the way, and then to march toward the Landing by the most available route. Polk was ordered to follow Hardee's line of march to Mickey's with Clark's division of his corps. His remaining division, Cheatham's, was directed to hold its position at Bethel, if attacked; otherwise it was to assemble at Purdy and join its companion division on the march. As the movements of this portion of Polk's command were contingent upon the attitude of the enemy, it was clearly understood that he had no control over its march until after it should unite with Clark's division. It was also directed that, while he was to march immediately in rear of Hardee for a time, he was to allow the division of Bragg's corps which moved from Monterey by the Purdy road to pass to his front when it reached the route along which he was marching — the Ridge road. The orders with which Polk moved out of Corinth directed that he should halt at Mickey's and mass his troops as a reserve; but on the march he was directed to remain at Mickey's only long enough to permit Bragg's corps to pass to his front (the whole of this corps having been thrown upon the Savannah road, and not divided between the Purdy and Savannah roads as intended); that then he should follow and form his line in rear of and parallel to the

left half of Bragg's line. Polk's movements were thus subordinated to those of Hardee and Bragg throughout the entire march.[1] Breckinridge, after leaving Monterey, was ordered to move up and form behind Bragg's right, in extension of the position to be taken by Polk.

Hardee pressed forward, closely followed by Polk, until the crossing of the road from Monterey to Purdy was reached; there he halted to allow Bragg's second division to pass to his front. After waiting three hours, he received the following dispatch from General Bragg:

MONTEREY, 10 A.M., 4th.

My dear General: Circumstances have . . .[2] my second division from the Purdy road. Both my divisions will move from here, then, direct to Mickey's on the Savannah road. I give you this information that you may not wait for my troops at the crossing of the Purdy and Ridge roads. General Breckinridge has not arrived from Burnsville, and, I fear, bad roads may delay him much. His command, forming the reserve, must necessarily control our movements to some extent. Let me hear from you by the courier, at Mickey's.

Yours most respectfully and truly,

BRAXTON BRAGG.

MAJOR-GENERAL POLK.

General Polk therefore continued his march to Mickey's, where he halted in column west of the roads' crossing, well out of Bragg's way, as directed.[3] The head of Bragg's large column, moving that morning from Monterey, only six miles distant, could do no more than reach Mickey's that evening.[4] During the night he made every

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, pp. 392–394.

2 One word — so injured by fire as to be illegible.

3 This position placed him out of the line of Bragg's march, which entered the road at Mickey's and continued thence to the east. See Bragg to Polk, 10 A.M., 4th.

4 General Bragg's official report says that Polk's corps camped in rear

endeavor to close it up, and in part succeeded, so that both commands, each upon the road on which it had marched during the day, rested before the morning in the vicinity of Mickey's. General Bragg's entire corps, however, was much behind the point it had been expected to reach; and the hope that both it and Hardee's corps would be in line of battle that evening was not fulfilled. The reason for the extraordinarily short march made by this corps is given in part in the following note:

Generals Johnston and Beauregard: I reached here at 8.30, ahead of my rear division. Bad roads, insufficient transportation badly managed, and the usual delay of a first move of new troops, have caused the delay. My first division is at Mickey's; and the ignorance of the guide for the second, as well as the reports I receive from the people here, induce me to order my second division to move on the same road as the first. I am also influenced to do this from the information I have of General Hardee's advance. I will send a courier to notify General Polk of my change. Nothing heard yet from General Breckinridge. I have sent a messenger to communicate with him and shall await a reply, as it is important for me to see him, under your instructions of this morning. *These delays will render it necessary to hold General Hardee in check until we can be ready in the rear. I shall take the liberty of sending this information to him and direct him to hold up until he hears of my force being in position.*

BRAXTON BRAGG, *Major-General.*

MONTEREY, 10 A.M., April 4, 1862.

Had Hardee been permitted to press on, undoubtedly he would have performed his part of the program for that day, and would have been in line of battle by dark.

of his corps that night. This is an error, as is shown by the reports of his subordinates, and as is known to the writer, who, after twelve o'clock that night, found the heads of both corps at Mickey's, and Bragg's rear division marching on the road between Monterey and Mickey's. See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 464.

But Bragg was forced to hold him back because of the slowness of his own movements, so that the army, instead of being in position for an attack on the 5th, was not likely to be in position before the 6th.

The orders for the 5th were that the entire army should move at 3 A.M. and take position as quickly as possible. Every one was ready. But during the night torrents of rain fell, so flooding the ravines and streams that Hardee found he could not move until dawn. Then he pressed forward, and by ten o'clock began his formation. Bragg followed, and, finding that Hardee's line could not cover all the ground between Owl and Lick creeks, he threw forward his first brigade to the right, and completed the formation of the first line. Meanwhile, he was establishing the second line of battle with his own corps, but his troops came up so slowly that it was nearly five o'clock in the afternoon before he could get them into position. And yet the distance from his encampment at Mickey's to his line of battle was not more than two miles and a half. The same slowness which characterized his movements on the 3d and 4th was thus continued on the 5th. At dawn of that day the head of Polk's column stood at the fork of the roads at Mickey's, ready to move up to its position the moment Bragg's command could be passed to his front. The first division filed past by eleven o'clock, but the second was not prompt in following; consequently it was two o'clock before Polk's command, headed by the battery to which the writer was attached, could begin its march, and four o'clock before he could begin his formation.[1] His second division, Cheatham's,

[1] He began it before General Bragg's was completed. See official reports of General Polk and General Clark, "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, pp. 406, 414.

now came up and took its position, having marched from Purdy that morning, a distance but little less than that which had been covered on the march from Corinth. Breckinridge's command appeared at about the same time, and, moving into position upon General Polk's right, completed the line of battle. But it was now six o'clock in the afternoon, too late to attack that day.

This rapid march of Cheatham's division — a considerable portion of it over roads that had been badly cut up by Clark's division and Hardee's corps — showed what might have been done toward beginning the attack on the 5th as was intended, had General Bragg been able to place his corps as he was ordered, and, as the writer believes, made every effort to do.

Hardee reached Mickey's House on the morning of the 4th. Pittsburg Landing was only eight miles away, and the point at which he was to form his line of battle not more than four miles at farthest. He was moving on to take position that afternoon, when General Bragg stopped him in order that he might catch up. Bragg should, at that hour, have been beyond Mickey's, and had he been, his line would have been formed under the cover of Hardee by 9 A.M. With one corps already in line to cover the formation of the others, no rainstorm would have checked the alignment of the remainder of the army on that morning. The darkness and the swollen streams which next morning checked the advance of Hardee's corps did so merely because the army did not know what it might stumble upon. Once in line and the battle begun, it is safe to say that Cheatham's and Breckinridge's forces would have been available by noon.

The failure to begin the attack on the 5th was a deep disappointment to every one. To General Beauregard it was not only an annoyance but a source of apprehension.

He feared that the movement had been discovered by the enemy, so that, instead of surprising them in their camp, as he had hoped would be done, they would be found fully prepared.

While Polk was arranging his line he received a message that General Beauregard desired to see him. Riding forward, he found Beauregard in conversation with General Bragg. General Polk says of this interview:[1] "By this time it was near 4 P.M., and on arriving I was informed that General Beauregard desired to see me immediately. I rode forward at once to his headquarters, where I found General Bragg and himself in conversation. He said, with some feeling, 'I am very much disappointed at the delay which has occurred in getting the troops into position.'"

General Polk replied, "So am I, sir; but so far as I am concerned, my orders are to form on another line [General Bragg's], and that line must first be established before I can form upon it." He continued: "I reached Mickey's at nightfall yesterday, whence I could not move because of the troops [General Bragg's] which were before me, until 2 P.M. to-day. I then promptly followed the column in front of me, and have been in position to form upon it so soon as its line was established."[2]

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 407.

2 In this connection it is interesting to introduce an extract from a letter written by General Thomas Jordan (Beauregard's chief of staff) which appeared in the New Orleans *Picayune*, June 5, 1887. It is singularly corroborative of the view taken by Polk concerning the origin of the complaint which was directed toward himself. Writing of the movement of the army from Corinth, after saying that to Hardee was assigned the initiation of the march, General Jordan says:

"Polk's corps necessarily followed Hardee's, because there was no other road for it to take. As for marching in the manner indicated in General Johnston's dispatch to Mr. Davis, of April 3, by three separate

This of course was a sufficient answer, and one which could not be gainsaid. General Beauregard, however, went on to say that "he regretted the delay exceedingly, as it would make it necessary to forego the attack altogether; that our success depended upon our surprising the enemy; that this was now impossible and we must fall back to Corinth."

This opinion was not shared by General Polk, however, as will appear when we narrate all the circumstances of this interview, which through the arrival of General Johnston was transformed into an impromptu council of war.

In most of the narratives of the battle of Shiloh — of Confederate origin — there are accounts of a council of war held during the afternoon or evening preceding the battle, at which the question of abandoning the campaign was the subject of discussion. This is the council which was brought about accidentally, as the direct outgrowth of General Beauregard's concluding remarks to General Polk. "He" (General Beauregard) "said he

columns, an examination of the maps extant of the period will suffice to show that such an order of movement was out of the question, as also that the plan of Beauregard was the one of all others most likely to assure the least confusion with the greatest possible celerity, whether with raw or seasoned troops. That is, to give the longest line of march to Hardee and his corps, who — commander and troops — were most accustomed to marching, to be followed on that same route by the troops that were to constitute the reserve, and also the next best trained to marching, while assigning to the troops (Bragg's) that were least accustomed to marching and to serve with each other, and to their commander, the shortest line of march to the common objective, a precaution justified by events; for, after all, it was Bragg's corps, as can be shown, that had the most delay and difficulty in getting upon the ground. And it might not be difficult to find reason in the record for the supposition that, had Bragg given the attention of himself and of his very large staff, somewhat more than seems to have been done, to the acceleration of the movement of his own corps and less to retarding Hardee's, and needlessly awaiting Breckinridge's movement, it had

'regretted the delay exceedingly, as it would make it necessary to forego the attack altogether; that our success depended upon our surprising the enemy; that this was now impossible, and we must fall back to Corinth.'" When this remark was made, none of the general officers of the army were present except Beauregard, Bragg, and Polk, but at its conclusion General Johnston rode up and asked what was the matter. Beauregard then repeated what he was saying to Polk. Polk, in writing of this interview in his official report, after relating in substance all that has been said, continues:

General Johnston remarked that this would never do, and proceeded to assign reasons for that opinion. He then asked what I thought of it. I replied that my troops were in as good condition as they had ever been, that they were eager for battle, that to retire now would operate injuriously upon them, and I thought we ought to attack.

General Breckinridge, whose troops were in the rear and by this time had arrived upon the ground, here joined us, and after some discussion it was decided to postpone further movement until the following day, and to make the attack at daybreak.

been better. At all events, Hardee's corps, though dilatory in starting, yet, when set in motion, reached Mickey's 'on the morning of April 4, early enough to have advanced and taken that afternoon the order of battle prescribed for him, had not Bragg seen fit to interpose to direct him to 'hold up' in the quarter of Mickey's to await the movements of his own corps." (See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. ii, p. 391.) "Polk's corps, it is proper to say, or rather Clark's division [Cheatham had no relation to the matter.—W. M. P.] seems to have been moved with as little delay as might be expected, and not to have been at all responsible for the delay of Bragg's troops, as I heard General Bragg sharply complain to General Beauregard in the afternoon of the 5th of April—a report made with such circumstantiality at the time as to induce the latter to speak to General Polk of the belatement and of its grave consequences, with the feeling and in effect the words recited by that officer in his official report of the battle (September, 1862), addressed to General Samuel Cooper."

This, in brief, was the council before Shiloh which has become historic. Its details have been elaborated by some, but the essential facts are as stated by General Polk. How far General Polk's attitude went in enabling General Johnston to maintain his position, no one can say positively; but the following extract from a letter written by General William Preston of Kentucky, General Johnston's aide-de-camp, points to a very positive influence:

> The divisions of Generals Polk and Breckinridge came up, and a consultation was held by General Johnston with his chief officers. He informed me that some one or more doubted the propriety of attacking General Grant's forces, on account of the delay, and considered it best to withdraw to Corinth.
>
> It was then about four o'clock, and after a short while General Johnston came near and directed Colonel Jordan, serving as chief of staff, to prepare to write orders. In the meanwhile he spoke to me with more than his usual animation, and informed me that he would attack the enemy at or before the earliest dawn. He then in the course of our short conversation spoke in very complimentary terms of General Polk, and said, "Polk is a true soldier and friend." The impression left on my mind was that of strong approval and pleasure at General Polk's course in the consultation, and a gratifying concurrence of opinion.

The amount of detail of the advance of the army from Corinth and the formation of the line of battle here given has been rendered necessary by the many statements which from time to time have been published concerning this movement,— statements which have not gone to the bottom of the difficulties then besetting the army. The heavy rains undoubtedly caused delays. But they were not all. The faulty subdivision

of the army gave Bragg such a large preponderance of the force that his command was unwieldy. He had to move three times as many men as Polk, and more than twice as many as Hardee, and, moreover, there were scarcely two regiments in his corps that had ever marched a day. Hardee's men had marched from Bowling Green, Polk's from Columbus, and both had had some experience in marches at the beginning of their careers in Missouri. When to these odds against him was added the heaviest route, it is easy to see why, from the first, General Bragg was always behind. Polk and Hardee, with their relatively small forces, moved along the ridges, while Bragg struggled through the lowlands, and, beyond Monterey, through the swamps and sunken grounds of Lick Creek. But the plans for arraying the forces were as unfortunate as the arrangements for bringing them up had been. Two of the corps were extended over the entire line of battle, one behind the other, each in a single line except at one point upon the right flank, where one brigade from Bragg's corps filled out Hardee's line. The third, or reserve, line was formed as the second should have been; that is, with a corps upon each side of the central road. Here, again, the preponderance of Bragg's numbers was an embarrassment, and, no doubt, was the cause of the error in formation. He had six brigades; if he had been given four, and the other two assigned one to Hardee and one to Breckinridge, each corps would have had an equal number. With one corps deployed to cover the front, as was perhaps necessary in view of the circumstances of the approach, the remaining three, each with its own reserves, might have been so placed in a second and third line as to have covered the ground and yet have been able to maintain their organization in the battle. As it

was, before the battle of the first day had been half fought the entire army was disjointed, Hardee's, Bragg's, and Polk's corps being mixed up in a conglomerate mass. When one of these officers had to concentrate a force for an assault upon a difficult point, he had to gather men from almost every corps in the army. Conflicting orders were thus of necessity often given, and so it came about that, instead of the army being continuously projected in heavy masses upon the Federal divisions, its behavior was much like that of a balking team of horses: as one command went forward, the other was standing still. This defect was in part corrected by an arrangement made between Generals Bragg and Polk, by which Polk took command of the center, and Bragg the right, General Hardee directing the troops upon the left. But it was twelve o'clock before the corps commanders had gotten into positions from which they could hope to accomplish anything definite, and then only by an arrangement which ignored the lines of the commands assigned them for the battle.

Approaching the events of the battle, it is believed that the purposes of this work will be fully served by simply giving extracts from General Polk's official report. This seems all the more appropriate because of the many full accounts which already have been presented by most of the leading actors, or by their biographers. As an introduction, however, to this narrative, we will say that throughout the battle General Polk showed that disposition to personally supervise important matters so characteristic of the man. He held a position well up against his line, arranging and placing commands as the hotly contested points in his front demanded, and on four occasions, placing himself at the head of his troops, he led them in desperate

charges against their gallant foes. In the second of these assaults his faithful orderly was killed at his side. General Polk felt on this field that the fate of the Confederacy hung almost in the balance, and he saw that nothing short of complete victory would answer the pressing needs of the South. He therefore, in common with the other corps commanders, assumed positions which under different conditions might better have been left to subordinates. Although the result was a crushing blow to their cause, yet the feeling of mutual reliance, sympathy, and fellowship between General Polk and his troops which was gained on that fiercely contested field was never afterward shaken, but went with both and upheld both in the trying scenes that were to come thereafter.

The substance of General Polk's report of the part taken by his corps in the battle is as follows:

At the appointed hour of the morning of the 6th my troops were moved forward, and so soon as they were freed from an obstruction formed by a thicket of underbrush, they were formed in column of brigades and pressed onward to the support of the second line. General Clark's division was in front. We had not proceeded far before the first line, under General Hardee, was under fire throughout its length, and the second, under General Bragg, was also engaged.

The first order received by me was from General Johnston, who had ridden to the front to watch the opening operations, and who, as commander-in-chief, seemed deeply impressed with the responsibilities of his position. It was observed that he entered upon his work with the ardor and energy of a true soldier, and the vigor with which he pressed forward his troops gave assurance that his persistent determination would close the day with a glorious victory. The order was to send him a brigade to the right for the support of the line of General Bragg, then hotly engaged. The

brigade of Stuart, of Clark's division, was immediately dispatched to him, and was led by him in person to the point requiring support. I was then ordered by Beauregard to send one of the brigades of my rear division to the support of Bragg's left, which was pressed by the enemy. Orders were given to that effect to Cheatham, who took charge of the brigade in person, and executed the movement promptly. My two remaining brigades were held in hand till I received orders to move them directly to the front to the support of General Bragg's center. These were Russell's, of Clark's division, which was directed by that officer, and Bushrod Johnson's, of Cheatham's division. They moved forward at once, and were both very soon warmly engaged with the enemy.

The resistance at this point was as stubborn as at any other on the field. The forces of the enemy to which we were opposed were understood to be those of General Sherman, supported by the command of General McClernand. They fought with determined courage, and contested every inch of ground. Here it was that the gallant Blythe, colonel of the Mississippi regiment bearing his own name, fell under my eye, pierced through the heart while charging a battery. It was here that (Bushrod) Johnson, while leading his brigade, also fell — it was feared — mortally wounded, and Clark, while cheering his command amidst a shower of shot and shell, was struck down and so severely wounded in the shoulder as to disable him from further service and compel him to turn over a command he had taken into the fight with such distinguished gallantry. And here also fell many officers of lesser grade, among them the gallant Captain Marshall T. Polk of Polk's battery (who lost a leg), as well as a large number of men, who sealed their devotion to our cause with their blood. We nevertheless drove the enemy before us, and dislodged him from his strong position, and captured two of his batteries.

After these successes the enemy retired in the direction of the river, and while they were being pressed I sought out Bragg, to whose support I had been ordered, and asked him

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where he would have my command. He replied: "If you will take care of the center, I will go to the right." It was understood that General Hardee was attending to the left. I accepted the arrangement and took charge of the operations in that part of the general line for the rest of the day. It was fought by three of my brigades only,—Stewart's, Johnson's (afterward Preston Smith's), and Russell's. My fourth brigade, that of Colonel Maney, under the command of General Cheatham, was on the right with Bragg and Breckinridge. These brigades, with occasionally a regiment of some other corps, which became detached, were fully employed in the field assigned me. They fought over the same ground three times, as the fortunes of the day varied, always with steadiness—a single instance only excepted, and that only for a moment—and with occasional instances of brilliant courage. . . .

About three o'clock intelligence reached me that the commander-in-chief, General Johnston, had fallen. He fell in discharge of his duty, leading and directing his troops. His loss was deeply felt. It was an event which deprived the army of his clear, practical judgment and determined character, and himself of an opportunity he had courted for vindicating his claims to the confidence of his countrymen against the inconsiderate and unjust reproaches which had been heaped upon him.

The moral influence of his presence had nevertheless already been impressed upon the army, and an impulse given to its action which the news of his death increased instead of abated. The operations of the day had now become so far developed as to foreshadow the result with a good degree of certainty, and it was a melancholy fate to be cut off when victory seemed hastening to perch upon his standard. He was a true soldier, high-toned, eminently honorable and just, considerate of the rights and feelings of others, magnanimous and brave. His military capacity was also of a high order, and his devotion to the cause of the South unsurpassed by that of any of her noble sons who had offered up their lives on her altar. I knew him well from childhood,—none knew

him better,—and I take pleasure in laying on his tomb as a parting offering this testimonial of my appreciation of his character as a soldier, a patriot, and a man.

The enemy in our front was gradually and successively driven from his position and forced from the field back on the river-bank. About 5 P.M. my line attacked the enemy's troops, the last that were left upon the field, in an encampment on my right. The attack was made in front and flank; the resistance was sharp but short. The enemy, perceiving he was flanked and his position completely turned, hoisted a white flag and surrendered. It proved to be the commands of Generals Prentiss and William L. Wallace. The latter, who commanded the left of their line, was killed by the troops of Bragg, who was pressing him at the same time from that quarter. The former yielded to the attack of my troops on their right, and delivered his sword, with his command, to Russell, one of my brigade commanders, who turned him over to me. The prisoners turned over were about two thousand. They were placed in charge of Lieutenant Richmond, my aide-de-camp, and with a detachment of cavalry sent to the rear.

I take pleasure in saying that in this part of the operations of my troops they were aided by the Crescent Regiment of Louisiana, M. L. Smith. This command was composed chiefly of young men from the city of New Orleans, and belonged to Bragg's Corps. It had been posted on the left wing in the early part of the day to hold an important position, where it was detained and did not reach the field until a late hour. On arriving it came to the point at which I was commanding and reported to me for orders. The conduct of this regiment during the whole afternoon was distinguished for its gallantry, both before and after the capture of the command of Prentiss, in which it actively participated.

Immediately after the surrender I ordered Colonel Lindsay, in command of one of the regiments of cavalry belonging to my corps, to take command of all the cavalry at hand and pursue such of the enemy as were fleeing. He detached Lieutenant-Colonel Miller of his own regiment on that service

immediately, while he proceeded to collect and take charge of other commands. Miller dashed forward and intercepted a battery within one hundred and fifty yards of the river,—the Second Michigan,—and captured it before it could unlimber and open fire. It was a six-gun battery, complete in all its equipments, and was captured, men, horses, and guns. A portion of this cavalry rode to the river and watered their horses.

By this time the troops under my command were joined by those of Bragg and Breckinridge and my fourth brigade, under Cheatham, from the right. The field was clear. The rest of the forces of the enemy were driven to the river and under its bank. We had one hour or more of daylight still left, were within from one hundred and fifty to four hundred yards of the enemy's position, and nothing seemed wanting to complete the most brilliant victory of the war but to press forward and make a vigorous assault on the demoralized remnant of his forces.

At this juncture his gunboats dropped down the river, near the landing where his troops were collected, and opened a tremendous cannonade of shot and shell over the bank in the direction from which our forces were approaching. The height of the plain on which we were, above the level of the water, was about one hundred feet, so that it was necessary to give great elevation to his guns to enable him to fire over the bank. The consequence was that shot could take effect only at points remote from the river's edge. They were comparatively harmless to our troops nearest the bank, and became increasingly so to us as we drew near the enemy and placed him between us and his boats.

Here the impression arose that our forces were waging an unequal contest—that they were exhausted and suffering from a murderous fire, and by an order from the commanding general they were withdrawn from the field.

One of my divisions, that of General Clark, consisting of Stewart's and Russell's brigades, now under the command of General Stewart, bivouacked on the ground with the rest of the troops, and were among the first to engage the enemy on the following morning.

They were actively engaged during the day, and sustained the reputation they had won the day before. The other division, under Cheatham, a brigade of which was separated from me at an early hour on the 6th, fought throughout the day with the skill and courage which always distinguishes that gallant officer, and was moved by him to his camp of the night before. They were taken there to obtain rations and to prepare for the work of the following day. Hearing they had gone thither, I informed General Beauregard I should follow them, to ensure their being on the ground at an early hour in the morning. This I did, and gave orders that night in person to Cheatham to be ready to move at daylight.[1]

Before daylight I dispatched my aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Richmond, to put them in motion. Their march was stopped for some time to arrest a stampede which came from the front. They then moved under the command of Cheatham to the field. I sent forward a staff-officer to Beauregard to inform him of their approach, and was directed to post them in the rear of Shiloh Church and hold them until further orders. It was not long before an order from the commanding general was re-

1 At the time that Polk made this report of the position of his second division, and of his intention toward it, the feeling at army headquarters was one of confidence in an achieved victory. General Beauregard had then telegraphed to Richmond: "We this morning attacked the enemy in strong position in front of Pittsburg, and after a severe battle of ten hours, thanks to the Almighty, gained a complete victory, driving the enemy from every position." This feeling accounts for the fact that Polk was not ordered to march the command back that night. It had gone there without his knowledge, having been separated from him by the order to fall back, given from army headquarters direct to division, brigade, and regiment commanders during the engagement. The confusion amongst all the commands growing out of this unfortunate order was so great that Polk, after placing his first division in position, felt it to be best that he should go in person in order to secure the return of the second by dawn. As will be seen from all the reports, it arrived in ample time to accomplish everything demanded by the situation. Nothing suffered by its absence. On the contrary, it was about the only division that stood intact on the battlefield the next day, which no doubt accounts for the fact that of all the commands assembled by General Beauregard that morning, Cheatham's division rendered the best sustained service.

ceived to move these troops to the support of the line in my front. They were formed in line of battle and moved forward half a mile to the position held by General Breckinridge. Finding he was able to hold his position without assistance, they were moved by the left flank, past Shiloh Church, to form on the left of our line. Here they were formed under the supervision of General Cheatham immediately in front of a very large force of the army, now pressing vigorously to turn our left flank.

They engaged the enemy as soon as they were formed, and fought him for four hours,— one of the most desperately contested conflicts of the battle. The enemy was driven gradually from his position, and though reinforced several times during the engagement he could make no impression on that part of our line. During this engagement the command of General Cheatham was reinforced by a Louisiana brigade under Gibson, and by the Thirty-third Tennessee under Campbell, and the Twenty-seventh Tennessee under Love; all of whom did admirable service, and the last-named of whom fell mortally wounded. This force maintained the position it had held for so many hours up to half-past two o'clock, the time at which orders were received from the commanding general to withdraw the troops from the field. I gave orders accordingly, and the command was retired slowly and in good order in the direction of our camp, the enemy making no advance whatever.

In the operations of this morning as well as of the day before, those of my troops who acted under the immediate orders of General Cheatham bore themselves with conspicuous gallantry. One charge particularly, which was made under the eye of the commander-in-chief and his staff, drew forth expressions of the most unqualified applause.

General Polk suppressed his own part in this charge, but General Beauregard, in his "Military Operations" (vol. i, p. 313), is more explicit. He says:

Just about the time (10.30 A.M.) when General McCook was assuming the offensive with his whole division, and was

near pushing through the gap between General Breckinridge's left and General Bragg's right, caused by the absence of General Polk with one of his divisions, the latter arrived on the field. . . . Dashing forward with drawn sword, at the head of Cheatham's fine division, he soon formed his line of battle at the point where his presence was so much needed, and, with unsurpassed vigor, moved on against a force at least double his own, making one of the most brilliant charges of infantry made on either day of the battle. He drove back the opposing column in confusion, and thus compensated for the tardiness of his appearance on the field.[1]

Referring again to the official report prepared by General Polk, we find that, while dealing with details mostly personal to his own command, it throws a strong light upon the battle as a whole, and, read in conjunction with the other official reports, it establishes the faithfulness and ability with which the interests entrusted to his charge were administered. It shows that the troops which were moved with the greatest celerity belonged to his corps; that his corps maintained its organization throughout the battle better than its companions; that it lost in killed and wounded nearly one third of its number; that at the close of the battle it had but nineteen men "missing" out of a total of 9422 taken into action; that the surrender of General Prentiss's command (the largest body of prisoners taken) was

[1] General Beauregard, in his "Military Operations," vol. i, p. 313, states that he knew nothing of the whereabouts of General Polk and Cheatham's division on the morning of the 7th until 10.30 o'clock, when Polk led the command into position on Breckinridge's left, as stated in the report. This is met by Polk's statement, as already given above; and, from the movements which he executed under Beauregard's direction prior to going into action at 10.30, it is obvious that he reported some time before this hour. For a corroboration of Polk's account of the position and movements of the division, the reader is referred to the report of its immediate commander, General Cheatham. See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. x, pt. i, p. 440.

made to one of its brigade commanders under Polk's immediate eye; and that of the fourteen pieces of artillery captured from the enemy and brought from the field, thirteen were carried off by this corps.[1]

The following letter, written to Mrs. Polk a few days after the battle (April 10), may be of interest here:

I wrote to —— a long letter the other day, the second I have written her since the war began, though I believe she did not receive the first.

I am thankful to say that the protecting hand of God was over me and around me, and I experienced no harm during either of the two days of the battle, although I was in the thickest of the storm during both days. All glory and honor be unto His holy Name for my protection and defense, for it was He who did it. It was He who "covered my head in the day of battle."

I cannot describe the field. It was one of great carnage, and as it was the second battle I had been in—the other being a bloody one also—I felt somewhat more accustomed to it. This one was on a larger scale, and a magnificent affair. I believe, from what I know and hear, you will have no reason to be ashamed of your husband or your sons. But of this—especially of the former—I will leave you to hear from others. Your sons[2] both behaved admirably. I was proud of them; the older was everywhere he was called on to be, and as my aide-de-camp rendered most important service. The younger served the guns of his battery very

[1] For the want of horses, many having been killed, nine pieces of inferior artillery were abandoned, leaving a total gain of but four.

[2] There were sixteen descendants of Robert Polk in the Confederate army, and a number in the Federal army, at the battle of Shiloh. General Polk had but two sons, the two mentioned in the letter to his wife. The elder, Alexander Hamilton, who served as captain and aide-de-camp, died in 1873 as the result of a sunstroke received during the campaign in Kentucky in September, 1862. The younger, then a second lieutenant of artillery, was attached to Bankhead's Battery of Light Artillery, and is the author of this memoir.

gallantly, and I am truly thankful to say they both escaped unhurt. The enemy was badly whipped the first day, and we ought, from the advantage gained, to have captured his whole force. We would have done so if we had had an hour more of daylight.

The battle of the day following was a drawn fight. We left them, and they did not follow us. The first prisoners captured, I believe, were those which fell into my hands, and the number was large.

The army is now refreshing itself for another attack, and we think on the next occasion our troops will behave better than on the last. As for details of the battle you have plenty in the newspapers.

The battle of Shiloh has been a favorite theme with many writers, both because of its importance and of the many controversial questions which immediately sprang up in both camps. They all, however, center about the management of the opposing armies by their respective commanders. Upon the side of the Federals the important issue has been the condition of General Grant's army at the close of the battle of the 6th. According to his own account and that of his friends, it was at that time in position to offer an effective resistance to the Confederates. According to General Buell's account General Grant's army on that evening was in the main a demoralized, helpless mass of fugitives. One thing is certain, however: it had been beaten from all its positions, and was then confronted by a victorious enemy, who was conscious of its advantage and was able to press it. This is shown in nearly all the reports which have been made by the officers who were at the front, and in some excellent notes which have appeared in the "Century Magazine" (1885).

The question at issue upon the side of the Confederates relates to the order to retire given by General Beau-

regard an hour or more before dark on the 6th, and while the opposing armies were in the relative positions as stated just above. The corps commanders and nearly all the subordinate commanders who wrote upon the subject concur in saying that there was abundant daylight for fighting, and that their commands were either advancing or preparing to advance upon the Federal position when the order to retire was received. On the other hand, General Beauregard and his friends, while accepting in the main the statements of General Grant and his friends as to the condition of the Federal army, fail to give like credence to the statements of the Confederate commanders as to the condition of their own forces, and claim that the Confederate army was so worn out and disorganized by its efforts that a further continuance of the battle would have resulted in its defeat that day.

The writer will not attempt to analyze these conflicting statements, as it would carry him beyond the province of his work, but he will say this much: his position gave him ample occasion to discover that, upon the propriety or necessity for the order to retire on the afternoon of the 6th, the verdict of General Beauregard's army was against him.[1] It was always believed, from the advantage gained, that the whole of Grant's army ought to have been captured, and had General Beauregard shown less ability and gallantry in extricating his army from its perilous position on the 7th, that one order would have robbed him of its confidence. As it was, though defeated, the army still looked to him with trust,

[1] The writer received the orders just as he had been placed in charge of the light battery (2d Michigan) captured from the enemy by the cavalry after the surrender of General Prentiss. It was a six-gun battery, and was captured and turned over entire — men, horses, and guns.

and it is pleasant to believe that, had his health permitted him to remain in command, the faults of Shiloh would have been atoned in better results upon fields yet to come.

The opportunity was to be denied him, however; ill health continued to hamper him, and finally led to his displacement in favor of General Bragg. This is set forth accurately in the following paragraph in a letter from General Bragg, who in all things was nearest to General Beauregard at that time:

> General Beauregard has never been physically equal to the labors of his position since I joined him in March (2d) last, and has often said to me he could not get on with its labors without the cordial and earnest assistance I gave him. Our intercourse was daily, free, unrestrained, and as harmonious as if we had been brothers."[1]

The defeat at Shiloh was succeeded by weary disheartening weeks, first of camp life and then of unavailing skirmishing against the steadily advancing Federal line. The arrival of General Van Dorn's corps (some 17,000 men) infused fresh spirit into the army for a time, but the enlistment period of large numbers of the soldiers was expiring. Corinth was fast proving itself a most unhealthy location, so that disease and desertion conspired to thin the Confederate ranks to a degree which made further resistance to the largely superior Federal force unavailing. Two attempts were made to bring on a general engagement. These failing, General Beauregard withdrew his army to Tupelo in Mississippi. The following letter enables us to keep in view the subject of this memoir:

1 "Military Operations, General Beauregard," vol. i, p. 592.—Bragg to Forsyth.

HEADQUARTERS 1ST CORPS,
ARMY OF THE MISSISSIPPI, June 3, 1862.

My dear Daughter: I send Meck down to see you and to spend a few days with you, as well for your sake as for his. He will tell you all the news of the army and of me. We have deemed it advisable, after having kept the enemy employed six weeks in digging and embanking all the way from the Tennessee River to Corinth, and just when he had spent millions of dollars, and lost thousands of men by the climate and water, and when he had just got ready to open his heavy batteries,—to bid him good-morning and invite him down a little farther South.

How he likes it we have not heard. We like the change very much, as it gives us a delightful woodland for our camps and fine, pure, spring freestone water and plenty of fresh beef. I have a delightful camp myself, and wish you could look in on me and see how comfortable I am. My health is, thank our Heavenly Father, very good, and, except that I am separated from my family and grieved with the disturbed state of the country, I am as happy as I generally am, and you know that is not miserable. . . .

This cheerful letter was scarcely justified by the conditions then being forced upon the people in that quarter of the Confederacy, but it serves to illustrate as well as any other produced in this book General Polk's unvarying attitude toward even his own family in all questions of state policy or army movement. If matters were not all right, they soon would be. In his entire private correspondence during the war but one exception occurs, and that came just after the defeat at Gettysburg and the fall of Vicksburg, where in writing Bishop Elliott a confidential letter he said:

As to the army as it stands, we have no fear; but it is not strong enough. It must be increased. We have the men, and they should be put into the ranks. To accomplish this more

vigor is required in the Administration. Its action is not decided enough. But the indication which I think most significant is *the tendency now manifesting itself in different States among the people to let down.* This must be looked to.

At this time no such tendency had shown itself, as was being proved in the readiness with which the people surrendered their property to the army, or submitted to its loss where its destruction was deemed necessary as a part of the war policy. This was particularly noticeable along the Mississippi River, where large quantities of cotton were being burned by the government to prevent the possibility of it being disposed of to buyers outside the Confederate lines, who were offering the enormous prices which that staple commanded during this period of scarcity.

General Polk was one of the heaviest losers by this act of destruction. In fact, it dealt the finishing blow to what remained of his fortune; and as the above letter was written but a few days after he had heard of his loss, it becomes an index of the man's spirit, not only in the face of public disaster but of private calamity as well.

CHAPTER V.

THE KENTUCKY CAMPAIGN.

JUNE 21 TO NOVEMBER, 1862.

General Beauregard relieved from command.—Appointment of General Bragg as commander-in-chief.—A promising outlook.—General Buell's advance toward Chattanooga.—Reinforcements for General Kirby Smith.—General Van Dorn opposed to General Grant.—General Bragg determines on an offensive campaign.—Movement against Cumberland Gap.—The Army of Mississippi advances into Middle Tennessee.—Movements in Kentucky.—General Kirby Smith defeats General Nelson at Richmond.—Confederate enthusiasm.—General Buell's position at Bowling Green.—Importance of Louisville.—Capture of Mumfordsville.—General Bragg's discomfiture.—General Buell enters Louisville.—Rearrangement of the campaign.—Endeavors to form Confederate government in Kentucky.—Favorable conditions for a campaign.—General Bragg's plans.—General Polk's dilemma.—Conflicting situations and orders.—General Buell outgenerals General Bragg.—Situation before Perryville.—General Bragg's plans.—General Hardee's letter.—Battle of Perryville.—Spirit of the Confederate troops.—Confederate retreat to Harrodsburg.—Feats of gallantry at Perryville.—Heroism of Lieutenant-Colonel Parsons.—General Polk's narrow escape.—The Confederates abandon Kentucky.—General Bragg resumes command of the Army of Mississippi.—Polk ordered to Richmond.—Interview with the President.—Appendix.

On the 21st of June the army was surprised by the announcement that General Beauregard had been relieved from the command, and that General Bragg was appointed in his stead. The event had been fore-

shadowed, however, by what was known concerning the state of Beauregard's health, and, while many regretted the change, all hailed the new chief as the commander who was to reverse the line of disasters that had recently so heavily pressed upon them. General Bragg began his administration with vigor, and it was soon whispered about that a movement upon the enemy was in the near future. As commander of the Army of Mississippi he had been most conspicuous in fighting the demoralization which fell upon the troops after the failure at Shiloh. The laxness which marked many commands had yielded to his stern discipline, and the administration of the general affairs of his force was such that without exaggeration it may be said that it had become as efficient a body of men as any of equal size within the limits of the contending armies, Federal and Confederate.

Having proved his ability as an organizer, General Bragg was now to test himself upon the higher field of grand tactics and strategy.

The first element of a commander's success is the confidence of his army, and this General Bragg then possessed to the fullest extent. It possessed the army from the highest to the lowest, and, eagerly awaiting his commands, all held themselves ready to do his bidding. General Polk, it is well to say, fully shared this feeling. Witnessing, as he did, the admirable results of the efforts toward improving the condition of the army, he was prepared to find in General Bragg all that was claimed for him as the future director of the fortunes of the Confederacy in that quarter of the field.

In the latter part of July, General Kirby Smith, the commander of the Department of East Tennessee, informed General Bragg that General Buell was pressing

him in the direction of Chattanooga, and asked for assistance. He also proposed that General Bragg should transfer his army to his department, and initiate from there an offensive campaign into Middle Tennessee and Kentucky, offering to place himself and his entire command under General Bragg's direction for that purpose. This proposition and offer was submitted to the government at Richmond, which in turn approved the step. Finding that the enemy in West Tennessee was disposed to remain quiet, General Bragg accepted General Smith's proposal, and transferred to the threatened point McCown's division of General Van Dorn's command, and later four divisions of the Army of Mississippi, leaving in Mississippi General Van Dorn and the troops originally brought by that officer from the Trans-Mississippi Department. General Breckinridge's division of Kentucky troops, which a short time before had been detached from the Army of Mississippi for operations in east Louisiana, was left to replace McCown's division. This proved an unfortunate exchange, as was shown by the absence of General Breckinridge and his men from Kentucky at a time when their influence was needed for the furtherance of General Bragg's plans.

General Van Dorn was assigned the duty of watching, and, if need be, operating against, General Grant, the Federal commander in West Tennessee. He was also charged with the defenses of the Mississippi River at Vicksburg and Port Hudson.

The Army of Mississippi arrived at Chattanooga early in August, and was there reorganized. Two corps were formed, which were designated as the right and left wings of the army. General Polk, who had been acting as second in command, was assigned the right wing, while the left was assigned to General Hardee.

The division commanders for the right were Generals Cheatham and Withers; for the left, Generals Buckner and Patton Anderson. The cavalry of the army consisted of the brigades of Generals John Morgan and Forrest, and Colonel Wheeler. Morgan had been operating in central Kentucky for some weeks, and Forrest was then performing a similar service in Middle Tennessee. Wheeler remained with the army.

Finding that General Buell's advance upon Chattanooga had been suspended, and learning through Forrest that his force was scattered throughout Middle Tennessee, apparently for the object of fortifying and holding the more important positions, General Bragg determined to inaugurate the campaign at once. Plans had been carefully considered by the government, General Kirby Smith, and himself, and it was finally concluded that the movement should be directed against General Buell's left and rear, with the view of regaining not only Middle Tennessee, but as much of central and eastern Kentucky as might be possible.

The Federal forces which had to be considered in this campaign were practically the disjointed segments of General Halleck's former command, viz., Grant and Rosecrans in West Tennessee, Buell in Middle Tennessee, and Wright in central and eastern Kentucky.

In the main the Federal forces were scattered along the railroad lines in the separate military districts which they proposed to hold, but their supply of rail and river transportation was sufficient to permit proper concentration in case of need. The only isolated command was the garrison at Cumberland Gap under General George Morgan. This position was well fortified, however, and in addition was supplied with food and ammunition sufficient for a siege.

In making his dispositions General Bragg opposed Van Dorn to Generals Grant and Rosecrans in West Tennessee; General Kirby Smith, together with Humphrey Marshall's small command in southwest Virginia, he opposed to the forces of General Wright in central Kentucky and at Cumberland Gap; while with his own immediate command, the Army of Mississippi, he undertook the operations against General Buell. General Van Dorn was now ordered to move upon Grant so as to prevent the sending of reinforcements to Buell or Wright. General Smith was directed at the same time to move upon Cumberland Gap, capture it if possible, but, if not possible, to leave a force to watch it, and with the remainder of his command pass to its rear, unite with Marshall (already ordered to move forward), and march into central Kentucky. The line marked out for his immediate command was an advance into Middle Tennessee by way of Sparta under cover of the eastern slope of the Cumberland Mountains. He intended to engage Buell south of the Cumberland River if possible; but if such a course should prove impracticable it was the intention to move directly north, enter Kentucky, unite with Smith, and then fight the decisive battle for the possession of the State.

This combined movement was earnestly supported by all General Bragg's officers, and was cordially approved by the government. The dispositions which he made were comprehensive, and but for the intervals separating the columns they were as complete as the circumstances permitted.

Thus was inaugurated the most extensive, and, had it been successful, far-reaching campaign ever attempted by any Confederate commander. It appealed to the enthusiasm of the people as well as to that of the sol-

diers, because it was a practical answer to all that the former in its anxiety was urging upon the government, and was in the direct line of what the army felt to be possible.

Late in August the Army of Mississippi crossed the Tennessee River at Chattanooga, and on the 28th took up its line of march across the Cumberland Mountains to Sparta in Middle Tennessee. It then numbered 31,500 men of all arms, including the commands of Wheeler and Forrest.

Meanwhile General Buell, gathering at Murfreesboro some 30,000 men, prepared to offer an active resistance.

The opposing forces, as then constituted, were almost equal, but the advantages of concentration and clearness of purpose were with General Bragg. General Buell, now on the defensive, had not penetrated his opponent's designs sufficiently to enable him to determine definitely the direction of his blow, but he kept well between his enemy and Nashville.

Halting at Sparta a day or two, General Bragg carefully studied the situation. Had his information shown that Buell would remain at Murfreesboro, no doubt he would have moved upon him at once; but Forrest, whose statements were rarely misleading, reported the enemy as abandoning that position and concentrating at Nashville.

Knowing that Nashville had been well fortified, and that it contained abundant provisions for an army, General Bragg wisely decided to relinquish for the present his design upon Middle Tennessee, and, instead, to push boldly into Kentucky, where General Smith had already secured a good foothold. In adopting this course he did not fail, however, to provide for the occupation of Middle Tennessee. General Samuel Jones, the

commander at Chattanooga, was instructed, with such few troops as he could gather together, to advance along the railroad toward Nashville as far as might be prudent; and at a later period, when in Kentucky, General Bragg sent Forrest, with two regiments, to the same region. It was hoped that General Van Dorn would be able to coöperate with this force. But his defeat, to be mentioned soon, rendered this impossible.

General Kirby Smith, as has been said, had already crossed the mountains near Cumberland Gap, whence, leaving Stevenson's division to watch Morgan, whom he found too strong to be attacked in position, he had advanced rapidly into Kentucky. General Nelson, commanding the central district of Kentucky, hastily gathering some 10,000 troops, attempted to check his progress at Richmond; but Smith, with a force of about 5000 well-organized and comparatively seasoned troops, promptly attacked, and after a severe conflict routed his opponent, wounded him, and captured 5000 of his men, with all of his trains and most of his artillery. Allowing his enemy no time to recuperate, General Smith pursued vigorously, and speedily made himself master of central Kentucky. Concentrating his forces at Lexington, he occupied the enemy by threatening Louisville and Cincinnati, while he awaited further developments.

The news of General Smith's success reached General Bragg's army about the time it left Sparta, and it served to quicken an enthusiasm already at a high pitch. Forrest now reported the Federal troops evacuating Nashville and moving north to Bowling Green, or perhaps Louisville, which was interpreted as a virtual abandonment of Middle Tennessee in order that General Buell might better secure and hold his communications with his base at Louisville. It appeared evident that there

was to be a race between the opposing forces for the vantage-ground in Kentucky, and, discerning more clearly the objects of the campaign, the soldiers entered upon it with the greatest ardor; even the lazy and sometimes obstreperous teamsters caught the infection, so that the trains, the chief cause of delay on such occasions, were always well in place.

General Polk's corps leading, the advance marched from Sparta on September 5. Moving rapidly, he reached Glasgow on the 12th, and under orders from General Bragg promptly seized the Louisville and Nashville railroad north of Bowling Green, at Proctor's station and Cave City station.

General Bragg now stood upon General Buell's communications, and at the same time occupied a position from which he could easily unite with General Smith, who, then operating about Lexington, was dispatched (on the 9th) to be ready for a concentration of all the forces. As stated to General Polk in a dispatch of the 10th, General Bragg's design upon reaching Glasgow was to "strike a blow" at Bowling Green, but General Buell, who had not been idle, frustrated the plan. Wisely leaving a division to hold Nashville, he had moved north in search of his enemy, with a force augmented by two divisions, which, in spite of Van Dorn, General Grant had sent him. His advance reached Bowling Green coincident with General Polk's arrival at Glasgow, and by the time General Bragg had brought all his force to Glasgow the bulk of the Federal army was near enough to Bowling Green to be placed behind its fortifications before the Confederate army could have reached it. If General Bragg seriously entertained the idea of taking Bowling Green at that date, he lost his opportunity when he failed to march directly upon it

after crossing the Cumberland River. It was evident, however, that the blow at Bowling Green was a contingent operation, to be attempted or not, as conditions might permit, after the railroad communication with Louisville had been interrupted. When this had been accomplished it was plainly seen that the opportunity had escaped; consequently the design upon Bowling Green was abandoned. The union with General Smith had been practically secured, however; for, although separated from him by some sixty or seventy miles, the roads were of unusual excellence and led through an abundant country, and no enemy was so placed as to impede the junction in the slightest degree. General Smith had informed General Bragg that he had captured a large amount of army supplies, so that the army was assured not only of strength but of plenty in that direction.

The object of the campaign being the reoccupation of Middle Tennessee and as much of Kentucky as could be secured, it was evident that General Buell must be brought to a decisive battle, and, if possible, defeated. Unless this was accomplished the campaign could not be a success. But General Buell occupied a strongly fortified position at Bowling Green, was abundantly supplied with provisions, and could fight or not as he saw fit. If he would abandon his fortifications, General Bragg, who then knew nothing of the reinforcements from Grant, would have fought him willingly; but this it was thought he would not do. In fact, General Buell's advance a day or two later toward Glasgow was construed as a reconnoissance rather than the movement of his entire army. It was evident that the country about Glasgow and Bowling Green was too poorly provisioned to await there his pleasure, for it meant starvation. It appeared, therefore,

that any direct attempt upon Buell's army must be abandoned for the present. There was another objective, however, the capture of which would secure to the Confederates advantages second only to the destruction of Buell's army, and that was the city of Louisville. This was General Buell's base of supplies, and at this time was filled with army stores of every description. But more than all, it was the chief city of the State, and its possession would carry an amount of prestige which could be abundantly utilized, not only from a military standpoint, but from a political one as well, in securing the purposes of the campaign. To move upon it involved no loss of position, and every mile gained in that direction only placed General Bragg that much nearer General Smith and his abundant supplies. Since General Buell could not be successfully reached, it was obvious that Louisville must be secured. Fortunately, General Smith, by threatening Cincinnati, was drawing away the reinforcements intended for Louisville. Everything, therefore, pointed to a continuation of the march north. General Bragg, of course, saw it all, and began his arrangements to carry this plan into effect.

On the 15th he wrote General Smith to be ready by the 23d to coöperate with him in the advance upon Louisville, while Smith, conscious of the importance of the movement, wrote on the same date urging a similar course upon General Bragg, and made his dispositions to that end, as shown in letters of the 18th, 19th, 21st, and 23d of September.[1]

Hardly had this combined movement been initiated when there occurred one of those side issues which in

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. ii, pp. 830, 845, 846, 850, 856, 859, 861, 866.

the life of an army often exercises an important influence upon its fortunes. General John R. Chalmers, a favorite officer with the commanding general, who had been placed with his brigade so as to hold the railroad at Cave City, acting without orders, made an injudicious and unsuccessful attack upon the fortified camp at Munfordsville, a point a few miles to the north of the post assigned him. The position in itself was one of no special importance at that time, but General Bragg thought the affair might affect injuriously the *morale* of his army; and, as the place could be taken without any departure from the shortest and most available route toward Louisville, he marched his army toward it and speedily captured it, with its garrison of 4267 men. This was accomplished on the morning of the 17th. Knowing that time pressed, it was supposed that the army would at once resume its march toward Louisville. This, however, was not done. General Buell was reported advancing from Bowling Green. On the 18th he reached the vicinity of Cave City, and, pending the arrival of Thomas's division, took a strong defensive position. For the first time General Bragg now faced a test of higher generalship, and the manner in which he bore himself proved a shock to his subordinates. Singularly elated over the relatively insignificant event of Munfordsville, for a day or two he seemed unable to determine definitely his future course. Wavering between his original purpose of joining General Smith on the one hand, and of fighting Buell at Munfordsville on the other, he finally adopted the latter course. But scarcely had he reached this conclusion when he discovered that with the arrival of Thomas, who came up on the 20th, General Buell had become too strong to be attacked with any hope of that complete success which

was indispensable to his army as it then stood. General Bragg therefore withdrew from Munfordsville on the 20th, and resumed his march northward. Five days had been lost, and in view of the great objects of the campaign and the possibilities of those five days, it is not too much to say that they were thrown away.

Instead of keeping between Buell and Louisville, General Bragg now turned to the right, and on the 22d took up a position at Bardstown, some fifteen miles east of the more direct route to that city.

When General Bragg reached Bardstown he expected to find Smith's force close at hand, and he still hoped to be in position to carry out his design upon Louisville or turn upon Buell as seemed best, but instead of this he learned that Smith had been diverted by the escape of the garrison from Cumberland Gap. It had been expected both by General Bragg and General Smith that General Marshall, commanding the small coöperating force from southwest Virginia, would be at hand by this date (September 22), and that to his command, together with that of General Stevenson and the cavalry of General John Morgan, could be left the duty of opposing this force. But Marshall was not at hand, and as the escaping Federal garrison was well ahead of Stevenson, moving apparently on Lexington, General Smith saw no way to protect all that he had gained at Lexington in the way of army supplies but by turning his own force against it. This he intimated to General Bragg on the 21st. In the same letter, however, he said: "My force is now at Georgetown and Paris, and will join you by a rapid march if, under existing circumstances, you so direct." And on the 23d he again wrote that with 11,000 men he would move to Frankfort on the 24th, so as to be in supporting distance for com-

bined operations against Buell. But on the 24th[1] he reported the enemy near at hand, and said that he would turn to intercept him, and in the absence of orders to the contrary he did this on the evening of the same date. It took about twenty-four hours for communications to pass from General Smith to General Bragg, so that General Bragg learned definitely of Smith's diversion on the night of the 25th. Coincident almost with the arrival of this information the head of Buell's column entered Louisville.

This closed the first act of the Kentucky campaign. The brilliant possibilities of the situation at Glasgow ten days before had not been realized. Louisville and General Buell's army had both escaped, and now, united, stood ready to initiate the second act of the campaign.

General Bragg, confident at Munfordsville, at Bardstown began to suggest failure, and in a letter of the 25th to General Cooper at Richmond laid the blame to the supineness of the citizens of Kentucky, and to the inaction of Van Dorn in north Mississippi. In expressing the first he was forgetful of General Smith's warning to him that little was to be expected from Kentucky so long as Buell's army remained undefeated; and in the second he allowed himself to express a censure which the facts were far from warranting. In his effort to obey instructions Van Dorn was defeated by Grant and Rosecrans at Corinth and Iuka. But General Bragg claimed that he himself had before him the armies of Grant, Rosecrans, and Buell combined, and that this would not have been had Van Dorn moved into West Tennessee as ordered.

A truer estimate of Van Dorn's part in General

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. ii, p. 870.

Bragg's campaign is contained in the indorsement of President Davis upon General Bragg's letter: "There was an evident error as to the withdrawal of the enemy from Tennessee. The battle of Corinth shows the impossibility of the advance referred to, as the part required of Generals Van Dorn and Price."

History must search elsewhere for General Bragg's discomfiture. As already intimated, the impression prevailed at the time of its occurrence, and the record confirms it, that the loss of time incurred in moving from Glasgow to Bardstown was the cause of the failure. The garrison at Munfordsville surrendered on the morning of the 17th. The Confederate force could have been at Bardstown on the 20th. General Smith should have been urged to hurry forward toward Louisville; and, seeing that he did not turn back toward Morgan until the evening of the 24th, but was actively continuing his preparations to join General Bragg, the combined forces could easily have been at Louisville on the 23d, the day originally designated by General Bragg for that purpose, and, as it proved, two days before General Buell's arrival, who had moved with all possible speed.[1]

Better still would it have been had Munfordsville been ignored altogether, for the fruits of that success were a poor substitute for the greater stakes that were lost through taking it.

It is evident that the distance separating Bragg and Smith was a cause of embarrassment in framing the necessary orders for coöperation, as it was impossible to determine the relative importance of events that might be transpiring upon the two fronts; but this was a strong additional reason for shortening that distance as rapidly

1 Prior to General Buell's arrival the city was held by a small and hastily gathered body of raw troops.

as possible, for in that way alone could all the problems be properly weighed. As was proven subsequently, the situation was favorable for the concentration, and it only needed positive orders from Bragg to Smith to bring it about, and that, too, in ample time for the accomplishment of the greater objects of the campaign.

Prior to the 24th of September the advantage of position remained with the Confederate forces. But the arrival of General Buell in Louisville changed the situation materially. Coincident with his advent to the city, reinforcements were poured in upon him, so that in five days he controlled at that point an army numbering within a fraction of 70,000 men. General Wright was hurrying his preparations at Cincinnati, which point General Morgan, with the force from Cumberland Gap, was fast approaching. It was safe, then, to count upon a force in that quarter of not less than 25,000 men, giving to the Federal generals about 95,000 men available for field operation in the immediate future.

Against this array General Bragg could oppose about 52,000 men of all arms. It was a veteran force, however, and, handled properly, was capable of gaining far better results than it obtained.

The change in affairs in General Bragg's front rendered imperative a rearrangement of the lines of the campaign.

Two lines of action were left open to the Confederates: one looked to the occupation of Bowling Green, Cumberland Gap, and Nashville, and the obstruction of the Cumberland River below Nashville, with a view to reëstablishing in part the line held the previous spring by General Sidney Johnston; the other looked to the occupation of the State of Kentucky, in order that the friends of the Confederacy there might be encouraged

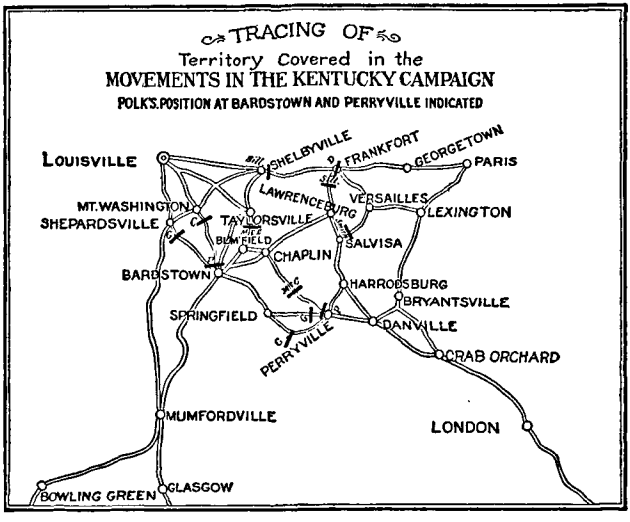
to organize a State government and actively unite themselves with the fortunes of the southern States.

Political reasons seem to have determined the adoption of the latter plan. In accordance with this view, General Bragg, on September 28, turned over the command of the Army of Mississippi at Bardstown to General Polk, and departed for Lexington to confer with General Smith and make arrangements for inaugurating a provisional State government, the officers for which had already been selected by the representatives of Kentucky then within the Confederate lines.

In order the better to comprehend this narrative, some further allusion to the number and disposition of the contending forces is necessary. On September 30 General Buell, with about 70,000 men, at Louisville, was ready to advance. General Wright, awaiting the arrival of Morgan, was not ready to move from Cincinnati, nor was it probable that his force would be before October 10, and as a fact it took no part in the campaign until it had about ended. Practically, therefore, General Buell's force was the only foe opposed actively to General Bragg, and was the one considered by him in the approaching campaign. General Bragg's force was divided between Polk and Smith, the first at Bardstown, the second scattered between Frankfort, Lexington, and Danville, but moving to a concentration at Frankfort. In round numbers it may be said that Polk's and Smith's commands numbered each about 26,000 men of all arms, giving General Bragg, as has been already said, 52,000 men. But this force was widely scattered, the two main bodies being not less than fifty miles apart, while General Buell's force, concentrated and well in hand, stood with one half of General Bragg's army forty miles to the south of it, and the other half a

somewhat greater distance to the east. With these facts in mind we return to the narrative of events as they arose.

Before leaving Bardstown General Bragg had selected Bryantsville, in the fork of the Dicks and Kentucky rivers, as a temporary base; had ordered the supplies captured at Lexington to be sent there; and from thence had established, by way of Cumberland Gap, a line of communication with his base proper, the railroad in



East Tennessee. His instructions to General Polk were to remain at Bardstown, and, if pressed by a force too large to justify giving battle, to fall back on the line toward Bryantsville in order to control his communications and be in position to unite with General Smith's column. A reference to the map will show the relative position of these various points.

From Louisville as a center, macadamized roads extended throughout the State. These highways were intersected at various points by equally good roads, and from every town of any importance in central Kentucky the same radiating and connecting system of macadamized roads prevailed, so that when, in addition to this fact, the abundance of the country is considered, it is not too much to say no fairer region for campaigning could be found on the American continent. There was one drawback at this season, however, and that was the scarcity of water.

On the 1st of October General Polk received from General Bragg, then at Danville, a letter dated September 30, directing him to move up toward Louisville and occupy Taylorsville, Shepardsville, Mount Washington, and Elizabeth (see map). All except the last named were villages situated upon the principal roads leading from Louisville to Bardstown, and were about half-way between the two places. In the same letter he told Polk that Stevenson's division of Smith's command, withdrawn from the pursuit of Morgan, and then at Danville, would be moved up to Shelbyville to replace Cleburne's brigade,[1] which then would move to Taylorsville and report to him. In concluding, he informed General Polk that he would be at Lexington the next day, and on Friday or Saturday in Frankfort, where he would inaugurate the Governor of Kentucky. No sooner had Polk received these instructions than he began putting them into execution. Hardly had the first step been taken, however, when Wharton, who commanded the cavalry in the immediate front, reported that Buell was advancing upon him in heavy force. At the same

[1] Cleburne's and Preston Smith's brigades had been detached to General Kirby Smith's command at the outset of the campaign.

time Polk received a note from Cleburne at Shelbyville saying that the enemy in his front was within four miles of his position, and that he thought he would be compelled to fall back on Frankfort. The situation was thus suddenly reversed. General Buell was moving to occupy Shepardsville, Mount Washington, Taylorsville, and Shelbyville; and upon each road he was reported in force, so that clearly it was no mere feint. General Polk directed his cavalry to further develop the enemy, and to that end moved up two brigades of infantry in support. All this he reported to General Bragg in a letter dated 10 A.M. October 2, and said that if an opportunity presented he would attack, but if this should be clearly inexpedient he would act upon General Bragg's original suggestion — that is, fall back toward Bryantsville by way of Harrodsburg and Danville, with a view to union with General Smith. He concluded by saying, "It seems to me we are too much scattered." The substance of this note was repeated to General Bragg at a later hour of the day. During the night of the 2d General Polk continued to receive information of General Buell's advance, and on the 3d Wharton reported that Taylorsville had been occupied the night before in heavy force, also that the head of the Mount Washington column had crossed the Salt River (twelve miles from Bardstown) that morning, that the Shepardsville column was moving forward, and that everything indicated an advance of the enemy to give him battle.[1]

All the information received by General Polk was to the effect that his force, and not General Smith's, was Buell's objective. Therefore, as he was not strong

1 See Colonel Wharton's dispatch, 12 M., "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. ii, p. 900.

enough to venture upon a general engagement, he decided to retire slowly along the line already indicated by General Bragg. This determination had hardly been reached, however, when he received a dispatch from General Bragg, then at Lexington, saying:

October 2.

A telegram from Frankfort represents the enemy moving in force on Shelbyville. It may be a reconnoissance, but should it be a real attack we have them. We shall be at Frankfort to-morrow with all of our force. Hold yourself in readiness, with cooked rations, to strike them on the flank. With Smith in front and our own gallant army on the flank I see no hope for Buell if he is rash enough to come out. I only fear it is not true. I will send you cavalry as soon as this move is developed. Hold yourself informed by scouts toward Shelbyville, and if you discover that a heavy force has moved on Frankfort strike without further orders, leaving your front and flanks well covered.

It was evident from this dispatch that General Bragg had a very imperfect knowledge of Buell's movements, and this impression was confirmed when, later, the following order, likewise from Lexington, was received:

October 2, 1 P.M.

The enemy is certainly advancing on Frankfort. Put your whole available force in motion by Bloomfield, and strike him in flank and rear. If we can combine our movements he is certainly lost. Your information of the 30th was correct, but your courier was two days and nights getting here. Dispatch me frequently to Frankfort.

The order was explicit, and under ordinary circumstances required prompt obedience. But it convinced General Polk that General Bragg had a very imperfect knowledge of the enemy's movements. This was not

surprising, however, seeing that he was far removed from the scene of action (some fifty miles), and occupied to a great extent with preparations looking to the inauguration of a civil government. General Polk felt, therefore, that he had some discretion in the emergency which faced him. In determining his line of action it was incumbent upon him to consider not only how far obedience to the order would jeopardize his own command, but how far failure to comply with it would endanger that of General Smith, with which General Bragg intimated an intention to attack the force moving upon Frankfort. He rightly concluded that Smith's movement would not be undertaken until he was definitely informed of his (Polk's) movements; he therefore had no uneasiness upon this score. As to the effect upon his own command of compliance with the order, it was quite evident that a movement toward Frankfort upon the road designated would speedily bring him in collision with all of Buell's army, an occurrence which he had already deemed unadvisable in view of the disparity of available forces. The matter, however, was one of such importance that he determined to lay it before his corps and division commanders; this he did, explaining fully the situation. Laying before them his orders, he practically said that from his knowledge of the situation he was prepared to disregard them, for the simple reason that he had no force "available" for any such movement. He was clearly of the opinion that he ought to retire slowly along the line originally designated by General Bragg, because by so doing he would cover the base and yet be in position to join General Smith at any time. All agreed that the command could not stay as it was, and yet it would be folly to attempt a march upon Frankfort along the line designated by General

Bragg, unless it was desirable to bring on an engagement with General Buell; and this in their isolated position they were not prepared to advise, unless it could be shown that by failing to do this General Smith would be endangered. General Polk's interpretation of General Bragg's intentions with regard to Smith was not wholly satisfactory to all present, but Polk was so sure that he was right, and that General Smith would not move until he could be heard from, that he assumed all responsibility upon that score, and asked what would be advised in the absence of the orders in question. Every one then concurred in the propriety of the course he had already marked out for the command. The moment this conclusion was reached General Polk wrote General Bragg:

BARDSTOWN, October 3, 3 P.M.

I am in receipt of your note of the 2d, 1 P.M., directing me to move with all of my available force *via* Bloomfield to Frankfort, to strike the enemy in his flank and rear. The last twenty-four hours have developed a condition of things on my right and left flank which I shadowed forth in my last note to you, which makes compliance with this order not only eminently inexpedient but impracticable. I have called a council of wing and division commanders, to whom I have submitted the matter, and find that they unanimously endorse my views of what is demanded. I shall therefore pursue a different course, assured that when the facts are submitted to you you will justify my decision. I move on the routes indicated by you toward Bryantville. The head of my column will move this evening. I send this by a relay of couriers I have established at intervals of ten miles from this to Lexington *via* Danville.

On the 4th (while on the march) General Polk received from General Smith a dispatch dated Frankfort, October 3:

The enemy occupied Shelbyville yesterday in force. Cleburne fell back to this point. My command is now all up and will hold this position. The cavalry have not yet reported any advance from Shelbyville, but report Taylorsville in possession of the enemy. It may be a reconnoissance in force, but should it be Buell's advance our commands at this point and Bardstown are too far apart and beyond supporting distance.

Accompanying this dispatch was another which General Smith had received from General Bragg, and which he enclosed for General Polk's information. It was dated Lexington, October 3, and said:

We hear nothing from your front. What is your information? If the enemy is still advancing send another courier to General Polk to [come to] your aid, and you must hold position so as to use the bridge in case the enemy should turn on him. Our whole force must be brought to bear at the same time.

These communications confirmed General Polk's opinion upon the question of General Bragg's intentions on Smith's front. Smith was not to advance, but was to hold position at Frankfort until Polk could be heard from. Later, upon the same day (October 4), the following dispatch was received direct from General Bragg:

FRANKFORT, October 3, 1862, 8 P.M.

I just have yours of yesterday P.M. I have sent you several dispatches since yesterday morning desiring you to move your force on the enemy, who was making a descent on this point. That move has proved to be only a feint, and has ceased. You will act accordingly, but I desire you to hold your command ready for a junction at any moment, and, if possible, place one flank at Taylorsville. Just as soon as Morgan gets in from his pursuit of his namesake you shall have cavalry. To-morrow we inaugurate the civil Governor

here, and transfer to him all that department. The brigades of Cleburne and Preston Smith will soon rejoin you. We have five thousand men just arrived at Danville; two thousand more, I hear, are nearly up, and Breckinridge has at last arrived at Knoxville, and [on] his way with his division. This will strengthen us. Recruiting is slow, but improving.

This dispatch suspended the order of October 2, 1 P.M., directing Polk to move upon the flank and rear of the force threatening Smith at Frankfort, and practically left him free to shape his course in accordance with the demands of the situation in his front, except that he was to hold himself ready for a junction with Smith at any moment, and was, if it were possible, to place one flank at Taylorsville. The placing of a flank as suggested was impossible, as Taylorsville was then inside Buell's lines; but he was already on the march to join Smith,—not along the route which General Bragg had in his mind, however (the road from Bardstown to Frankfort), because Buell's position made that impracticable, but along a line from which by the requisite detour the junction could be accomplished at any time it should be ordered. Reports from Wharton showed that Buell's left, with his center in easy supporting distance, was being steadily pushed in between Bardstown and Frankfort, so it was evident that if the junction was to be made anywhere near Frankfort, the retreat from Bardstown was a pressing necessity. In reflecting upon his course General Polk could not feel otherwise than that he had done everything that was possible to meet General Bragg's wishes, and that his course in declining to attempt the movement upon the flank and rear of the force in front of Frankfort had been justified not only by the situation but by the order suspending it. In time he was to learn differently. It was not

during the campaign, however, but many months after, when, exposed to the criticism of the public press, not merely for the failure of the Kentucky campaign but for that of Murfreesboro as well, General Bragg sought to throw upon General Polk the responsibility for the failure of this campaign. In an official report bearing date May 20, 1863, he states:

> I ordered Major-General Polk in writing, dated Lexington, 1 P.M., October 2, and sent it by two routes, to move from Bardstown with his whole available force by way of Bloomfield toward Frankfort, to strike the enemy in flank and rear, and informed him that Major-General Smith would attack in front. When received at Bardstown on the 3d, the general submitted this order, which is not mentioned in his report, to a council of wing and division commanders, and determined to move as originally instructed by me on leaving Bardstown. Fortunately, notice of this determination reached me at Frankfort in time to prevent the movement against the enemy's front by General Smith, but it necessitated an entire change in my plans,—the abandonment of the capital, and the partial uncovering and ultimate loss of our stores at Lexington.[1]

It is impossible to understand how General Bragg could have penned these statements when he knew not only that his own dispatches would disprove every word of them, but that it was a virtual admission of the claims of his critics that he was persistently ignorant of his enemy's position and blind as to his intentions. But we will not stop to comment here.

On the 5th we find General Polk, at Springfield, writing General Bragg: "I have kept you informed of our movements." He then reports the position of his commands, some at Springfield, the remainder on the roads to Harrodsburg and Danville. General Polk naturally thought

[1] See Appendix to Chapter V.

that if General Bragg still wished him at Frankfort he would order him there. He received a dispatch, however, dated Frankfort, 7 A.M., October 4, saying:

I have your dispatch of yesterday. Concentrate your force in front of Harrodsburg. A brigade of General Stevenson's command at Danville and Camp Breckinridge will join you. Cleburne's and P. Smith's forces here will do the same. General Smith's whole force is concentrating here, and we will strike the enemy just as soon as we can concentrate. Send ahead to have provisions at Harrodsburg. Keep the men in heart by assuring them it is not a retreat, but a concentration for a fight. We can and must defeat them. Advise me frequently of your movements and if the enemy follow you.

Later he received the following letter, which is explicit upon both the civil and military situations, dated Frankfort, October 4:

We shall put our Governor in power soon, and then I propose to seek the enemy. Your dispatch of the 2d, 10 A.M., including General Cleburne's, just received here. He has fallen back to Frankfort, but our cavalry is yet well in front, and no advance by the enemy was made this side of Shelbyville at three o'clock this morning. All our available forces are ordered up, and we will strike as soon as concentration is practicable wherever the enemy may be. . . . I should suppose the enemy would move on this place, the capital and nearest route to our supplies at Lexington, but it may be he hopes to strike you alone. Use every means to gain information, and let me hear from you often. If not otherwise directed, my staff will join me from Harrodsburg. I have ordered flour and bread to you, but the country around ought to supply you.

P. S.—1.30 P.M. Enemy in full force advancing on us; only twelve miles out. Shall destroy bridges and retire on Harrodsburg for concentration and then strike. Reach that point as soon as possible.

These dispatches show very clearly that General Bragg was uncertain of Buell's position; not from the want of information, however, but because he found it difficult to dismiss from his mind his conviction that Frankfort and Smith's column were Buell's objective. General Polk's information from Wharton, dated 10 and 11.30 A.M. of the 5th, showed General Buell to be in force at Bardstown and Bloomfield. He accordingly placed his cavalry so as to cover the line extending from Lebanon on the south, through Springfield, to Willisburg on the north. The following quotation from General Polk's official report of the Kentucky campaign is now presented:

On arriving at Perryville I communicated with the general commanding the forces, then at Harrodsburg, informing him that the right wing, under command of General Cheatham, had been ordered forward to take a position on the farther side of that town, and, as there was a scarcity of water, I had ordered General Hardee to halt Buckner's division near Perryville and to post Anderson's on Salt River between the two towns. These dispositions were carried into effect, and I reported to the general commanding in person.

The enemy had been held in check along the whole line of march, from in front of Louisville up to our present position, by those gallant cavalry commanders, Colonels Wharton and Wheeler, and we were constantly advised of his position and movements. He left Louisville in five columns on as many different routes, extending from the road to Elizabethtown around to that to Shelbyville, and we had reason to believe that much the larger portion of this force was concentrated upon Bardstown and followed our retiring army in the march to Perryville. The rest of his force pursued a route farther north to threaten General Kirby Smith.

General Polk's dispatches to General Bragg, together with the above extract from his official report, so accurately describe General Buell's actual line of advance

that it is only necessary to add a word concerning the force in front of Frankfort and to mention the general designs of the two commanders-in-chief before explaining the relative position of the two armies as they approached each other at Perryville. General Buell had moved his right and center corps, under Crittenden and Gilbert respectively, direct upon Polk at Bardstown. His left corps, under McCook, he divided, moving one division (Sill's — some 8000 men) upon Frankfort, while the remainder (two divisions) was thrust in between Frankfort and Bardstown. Sill was expected to occupy Smith while the remainder of the Federal army carried out General Buell's plan. This plan was to turn General Bragg's left and cut him off from Bowling Green and Nashville, and, if possible, Cumberland Gap. If this could be accomplished he expected to compel General Bragg to fight upon his terms or else retreat from the State by way of southwest Virginia. If only the first steps could be achieved, the Federal jurisdiction would at least be reëstablished upon much the same lines as had been occupied at the beginning of the summer.

When General Bragg determined to establish a civil government in Kentucky, he conceded the greater part of the primary objects of General Buell's campaign. But the concession was intended to be temporary only. The civil government was to be inaugurated, the Confederate forces were to be united, and then General Buell was to be fought wherever found, and driven across the Ohio. This, in brief, was the plan of campaign outlined by General Bragg.

On the afternoon of the 6th of October Buell's forces were in the following positions: Crittenden and Gilbert, following upon Polk's track, were nearing Springfield; McCook was five miles from Willisburg in the direction

of Bloomfield; while Sill, supported by Dumont's small division, was approaching Frankfort.

That night the Federal army, Sill's column excepted, was instructed to converge upon Perryville. McCook marched by the way of Macksville; Crittenden, leaving the direct road, took one at Springfield which by a slight detour approached Perryville from the south. General Buell himself moved direct from Springfield with Gilbert's corps.

While the Federal forces were executing these movements the concentration of the Confederate forces was progressing rapidly. Hardee, who had been halted at Perryville by Polk, held the position with Buckner's division. In order the better to cover the concentration of the army, he was instructed, the night of the 6th, to recall Anderson to his assistance. This was accomplished early on the 7th. Meanwhile General Cheatham, in temporary command of General Polk's corps, was camped at Harrodsburg, and Kirby Smith, retreating from Frankfort, had reached Salvisa, a town situated about as far to the north of Harrodsburg as Perryville was to the southwest (about nine miles). General Polk, writing a member of his family from Harrodsburg, October 7, said: "We have come to concentrate our army with that of Kirby Smith. It has been done, and we shall now give the enemy battle." But the question was, Where? It may seem strange that such a query could have arisen at that stage. It did arise, however, and General Bragg's inability to answer it cost him the campaign. He was as much in doubt at Harrodsburg as his dispatches, already given, show him to have been at Lexington and Frankfort. He could not divest himself of the belief that Buell's heaviest force lay toward Frankfort, in front of Smith, and he refused to believe that it had

been following Polk and that it was then approaching Perryville.[1]

He ignored Hardee's earnest appeal, and refused not only to maintain the concentration of his troops, but took Polk's largest division (Withers's) from him and sent it to join Smith, whom he ordered back to Versailles, in the direction of Frankfort, which movement he proposed to direct in person. General Bragg's intention had been to take Cheatham as well,[2] but, yielding in part to Polk's urgent appeals, he wrote Polk that in view of the news

1 In his official report (May 20) of these events, Bragg uses a dispatch from Polk (written him at Harrodsburg, midnight October 6) to justify his declining to believe that Buell was moving by the Bardstown line. General Polk said: "I have directed Hardee to ascertain, if possible, the strength of the enemy which may be covered by his advance. I cannot think it large." This was the closing sentence in a report to General Bragg upon the disposition of the troops for the following day (the 7th), a part being ordered back to aid Hardee. The enemy alluded to was that in Hardee's front near Perryville that afternoon. It proved to be nothing more than a heavy reconnoitering force. Buell's main column had scarcely reached Springfield, and McCook was but a short distance from Bloomfield.

The question to be determined was whether the force threatening Hardee that afternoon (the 6th) at Perryville was Buell's main body or not. Polk did not believe that it was, but, in view of what he knew about the position of the Federal army, he could not be sure, so he directed Hardee to find out. Pending Hardee's report, Polk held Cheatham at Harrodsburg instead of allowing him to join Withers, who was already camped four miles out toward Salvisa, to which point General Bragg wished both divisions to move the next day.

2 ("Circular Confidential.")

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY MISSISSIPPI,
HARRODSBURG, Oct. 7, 1862.

I. Cheatham's division will move forward to-night to Withers's position, and both divisions of the right (Withers's and Cheatham's) will move to-morrow to Lawrenceburg, thence to Versailles, and follow General E. Kirby Smith's command.

II. General E. Kirby Smith's command at Salvisa will move to-morrow to Versailles, throwing a division toward Frankfort. Allston's cavalry, now at Salvisa, will cover Cheatham's movement, reporting to Major-General Cheatham.

III. Major-General Hardee, commanding left wing Army Mississippi,

from Hardee he had better take Cheatham's division to Perryville, rout the enemy he would find there, and then move to his support at Versailles, and concluded by saying that no time should be lost in these movements.[1] General Polk protested against this disposition of the army, urged the strong expediency of concentrating all the forces at Perryville, and finally, seeing that General Bragg could not be turned from his purpose, begged that at least Withers's division might be returned to him; but all to no purpose. General Hardee's appeal, written from Perryville, throws such a vivid light upon the situation that it is given here entire:

PERRYVILLE, KY., October 7, 7.30 P.M.

My dear General: I am in receipt of your "confidential

will follow these movements as circumstances will allow, notifying these headquarters of his move.

Colonel Wood's infantry will join the guard at the depot at Bryantville, reporting to the commanding officer; these and his cavalry will report to Colonel Wheeler, commanding cavalry of Hardee's wing.

By command of General Bragg.

[Signed] GEO. WM. BRENT,
Chief of Staff and A. A. G.

To MAJOR-GENERAL POLK, *Commanding Army Mississippi.*

[1] HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT No. 2,
HARRODSBURG, Oct. 7, 1862.

General: In view of the news from Hardee, you had better move with Cheatham's division to his support and give the enemy battle immediately.

Rout him, and then move to our support at Versailles. Smith moved forward to-day in that direction, and I wish Withers to march to-night toward Lawrenceburg, crossing thence to-morrow to Versailles, and follow up Smith and report to him.

His wagon-train, except the ammunition and ordnance, had better cross at McCown's, turning off at Salvisa. No time should be lost in these movements. I shall follow Smith.

Respectfully and truly yours,

[Signed] BRAXTON BRAGG, *General Commanding.*

To L. POLK, *Major-General.*

circular" of this date, also your letter of instructions to General Polk.

From the tenor of the letter of instructions to General Polk, I presume that this is later than the confidential circular. Both are in the same enclosure and of the same date.

Permit me, from the friendly relations so long existing between us, to write you plainly. Don't scatter your forces. There is one rule in our profession which should never be forgotten—it is to throw the mass of your forces on the fractions of the enemy. The movement last proposed will divide your army, and each may be defeated, whereas by keeping them united success is certain.

If it be your policy to strike the enemy at Versailles, take your whole force with you and make the blow effective. If, on the contrary, you should decide to strike the army in front of me first, let that be done with a force which will make success certain. Strike with your whole strength, first to the right, then to the left.

I could not sleep quietly to-night without giving expression to these views.

Whatever you decide to do will meet my hearty coöperation.

Your sincere friend,

[Signed] W. J. HARDEE, *Major-General.*

GENERAL BRAGG, *Commanding Army.*

N. B.—If you wish my opinion, it is that in view of the position of your depots, you ought to strike this force *first.*

W. J. H.

Cheatham's division moved to Perryville on the afternoon of the 7th, and took up its position in the line already formed by Hardee.

Late on the same afternoon Buell formed Gilbert's corps about three miles in front of Perryville. McCook's corps rested that night nine miles in rear of Gilbert's left, and Crittenden's corps the same distance in rear of Gilbert's right; both corps were ordered to march, ready for battle, at daylight, and take position, one to the

right, the other to the left of Gilbert's command. Each had an excellent turnpike upon which to move, and the surrounding country was so open and the ground so dry, that, had the necessity arisen, it would have been easy for both to move across the fields to Gilbert's support. The concentration of Buell's army, certainly for the purposes of defense, was thus practically accomplished on the night of October 7. It numbered 58,000 men of all arms, exclusive of the commands of Sill and Dumont, and was divided between the three corps in the following proportions: Gilbert, 23,000; McCook, 12,500; Crittenden, 22,500.

This same night, at midnight, General Polk reached Hardee's headquarters. He found himself with about 16,000 men[1] in front of an enemy that he and his officers knew far outnumbered his own command. He seems to have known very nearly the actual disparity existing, and recognized that it was great enough to demand the utmost circumspection on his part. Fortunately, he considered that he was allowed some latitude in determining his course after he should reach Perryville and have consulted with General Hardee. He said:

"I did not regard the letter of instructions as a peremptory order to attack at all hazards, but as requiring me to take into account such information as Hardee might furnish, and that it left me at liberty to exercise such discretion in the details of the attack as sound sense and the facts before me demanded, it being understood that I should carry the instructions into execution as judiciously and promptly as a willing mind and sound discretion would allow."[2]

[1] See General Bragg's official report, Appendix to Chapter V.

[2] Polk to Hardee, "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1101.

This he wrote when General Bragg, many months after Perryville, denied that he intended any latitude, or that the wording of the letter of instructions permitted any such construction.

Be this as it may, General Bragg made it quite evident to Polk and Hardee, the night of Perryville, that he was very much pleased with all they had done for him that day.

About daylight General Polk called a council of his principal officers, and, after stating his instructions and explaining the condition of affairs in his front, expressed himself as clearly of the opinion that the proper plan to pursue was to await the advance of the enemy, and at a favorable moment attack vigorously with all his force. He was opposed to an attack at that time, as, even if successful against the force in front, the remainder of Buell's forces were so placed as to turn the attack into disaster, especially as there was no hope of help from either Withers or Smith.

His officers unanimously agreed with him, and General Polk, writing afterward, said:

> I felt I was acting on the inside of the instructions given, and under the deep and painful conviction that the force at my disposal was totally inadequate to perform the duty assigned it; and while I must attempt that duty, I should do it in such a way as to prevent the wreck and destruction of the little army with whose conduct and safety I was charged.[1]

The Confederate line, facing the west, its left resting on the town of Perryville, was formed along the east bank of Chaplin's Creek, between the stream and the Harrodsburg road. Cheatham's division was on the left, Buckner's on the right, and Anderson's in the

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1102.

center. In front and upon the western side of the creek was a range of hills of the same altitude as the ground upon which Polk's line was formed. Beyond this range was a smaller creek, Doctor's Fork, a tributary of Chaplin's Creek, which united with the latter about two miles below the town. It was upon the high ground on either bank of Doctor's Fork that the battle of Perryville was fought.

Water was a most important item in General Buell's army that night; consequently, in order that he might command the stream, Gilbert pushed Sheridan's division across Doctor's Fork. At daylight Polk threw forward Liddell's brigade, and quickly developed this advance. Supposing that it meant a continuance of the general advance of the day before, he wrote General Bragg (6 A.M., October 8):

> The enemy seem disposed to press this morning. Their pickets commenced firing at daybreak. Understanding it to be your wish to give them battle, we shall do so vigorously; should we succeed, we will pass to the right, with the view of joining General Kirby Smith. If it should become necessary to fall back, we will do so on Danville and Bryantville, with a view of uniting with General Kirby Smith at that point. I have directed General (Preston) Smith to have all the trains belonging to this army now at Harrodsburg collected and moved out on the road to Bryantville, and to be ready to move on that place when it should become expedient.
>
> P. S.—General (Preston) Smith's brigade should cover and protect these wagons should it become necessary.

The Federal advance did not continue, however; Gilbert merely moved his second division, Mitchell's, across the creek as a support to Sheridan, keeping his third division, Schoepf's, in reserve upon the west side of Doctor's Fork. About ten o'clock Polk directed Hardee

and Cheatham to advance their lines to the high ground between the two streams. Pending the execution of this order, General Bragg arrived on the field.[1] He had been unable to find the enemy in Smith's front, so he again turned his attention to Polk's. After a full consultation, and an examination of Polk's dispositions, which were in the main approved, General Bragg courteously declined to assume command, and left Polk free to conduct the operations upon his own plan.[2]

While these events were occurring upon the Confederate line, McCook arrived (about ten o'clock) and formed his line along the western heights overlooking Doctor's Fork. The position which McCook occupied was to the right and somewhat to the rear of the line occupied by Gilbert's left division (Sheridan's), his right being posted some eight hundred yards from Gilbert's left, and separated from it by the deep ravine through which Doctor's Fork ran. This gap in the Federal line was to prove a source of disaster to it that day.

Advancing his skirmishers, General Polk developed the Federal line soon after it took position. He found that the heaviest pressure was upon his right, McCook having pressed forward his skirmish line. As it was of the first importance to protect this flank, it being the one which covered the communication with Smith, Polk moved Cheatham's division from the left of the line to

[1] There is a discrepancy between this statement and one contained in General Hardee's official report, which says that General Bragg directed it. General Bragg did order it, but Polk already had reconnoitered the ground and had sent his inspector-general to execute it.

[2] It is important to state here that in April of the following year (1863) General Bragg claimed that Polk had disobeyed orders in not attacking at daylight. Polk, writing to Hardee upon the subject, said (April 17): "As to my being held responsible for disobedience of orders in this matter, *it never entered my head until the reception of your note.*" This shows that no complaint was entered at the date of the event.

the extreme right, and massed it in column of brigades under cover of the hills overlooking the confluence of Chaplin's Creek and Doctor's Fork.

This disposition threw the Confederate right somewhat beyond the Federal left, and placed the left in front of Sheridan's division, about covering his front. Preston Smith's brigade of Cheatham's division, which had been on detached duty, arrived about noon and was posted as a reserve. General Hardee, in order to cover the ground assigned him, placed his brigades with nearly a brigade distance between them, the intervals between the brigades in each case being covered by the reserve. The divisions from right to left now stood as follows: Cheatham, Buckner, Anderson, with Wharton's cavalry brigade protecting the right, while Wheeler covered the left and contested Crittenden's advance. The ability and gallantry with which Wheeler conducted the duty entrusted to him so far retarded Crittenden's advance that it was twelve o'clock before he reported with two divisions, and late in the afternoon when he took position on Gilbert's right. The value of this service will better appear as the details of the battle are unfolded.

About one o'clock General Polk received an order from General Bragg to advance his entire force to the attack. Before the order came, Wharton reported a considerable body of the enemy moving rapidly down the Macksville road toward McCook's left.[1] To move to the attack just then would have exposed his flank and rear to a counter-attack from this force; Polk therefore held his men until the force in question reached McCook's line, and then gave the order to advance.

Cheatham, his right prolonged and covered by Whar-

1 Starkweather's brigade.

MAP
OF THE
BATTLE-FIELD
OF
PERRYVILLE, KY.

Maj. Gen'l L. POLK
Comdg Confederate Forces

Prepared by
WALTER J. MORRIS

ton's cavalry, moved against the Federal left,[1] and upon the full development of this advance Hardee threw forward his command. The whole Confederate line was speedily engaged. Powell's brigade upon the left, together with about half of Adams's brigade, struck the front of Sheridan's division and could go no farther. The remainder of Hardee's line, however, bearing to the right, passed Sheridan's flank, pushed its left through the gap between Gilbert and McCook, and quickly enveloped the right of McCook's corps. Cheatham, meanwhile, was meeting with brilliant success against McCook's left flank. Gilbert sent two brigades to McCook's aid, but to little purpose, and the whole of this corps was driven until darkness put a stop to the fighting. One of its divisions (Jackson's), after the death of its gallant leader, was so cut up that it lost its organization and had to be merged into other commands of the Federal army. It was fortunate for the Confederate army that Sheridan and Mitchell did not realize how small a force stood in their front, for, had they done so, the movement of Gilbert's corps upon Polk's left flank and rear would have been the inevitable consequence. Their failure to realize the advantage was due to the judgment and skill displayed by General Patton Anderson. Anderson remained with that portion of his division which was checked in Sheridan's front; realizing the importance of occupying this enemy, he deployed his force into a heavy skirmish line and pushed it as close up to Sheridan as he could. Influenced not only by Anderson's action, but by what he saw going on upon his left and rear, Sheridan warned Gilbert that he could not hold his position unless reinforced immediately. Had he dis-

[1] For a graphic description of this gallant charge, see General Polk's report.

played but a half of the enterprise characterizing his behavior upon subsequent fields, he would have blighted Polk's triumph almost before it began. As it was, Anderson held him to his position until Mitchell, closing in from the right, outflanked and drove the Confederate left back upon the town. The sun was setting when this was accomplished, but the triumph of the Confederates had already been achieved.

From the beginning to the end of the battle the southern troops fought with conspicuous spirit. A large percentage, shoeless from the long marches, held their places in line throughout the battle, and when it was over the universal comment was that no field ever presented fewer stragglers. The Federal loss was 3220 killed and wounded, and 600 prisoners. Fifteen pieces of artillery were captured, and from 2500 to 3000 stand of small arms. The Confederate loss in killed and wounded was 3145; missing, 251. General Bragg, in his report of the battle written two days after the action, and with the events of the day vividly before him, said very justly: "To Major-General Polk commanding the forces, to Major-General Hardee commanding the left wing, and Major-Generals Cheatham, Buckner, and Anderson, commanding divisions, is mainly due the brilliant achievement on this memorable field. Nobler troops were never more gallantly led."

As soon as General Polk could readjust his lines he rode with General Hardee to General Bragg's headquarters to make his report and to learn the decision as to the movements of the next day. The presence of Buell's entire army was a fact too evident to admit of further doubt. Polk was therefore instructed to retire his command to Harrodsburg, the details of the movement being left entirely to his discretion. At midnight the

troops withdrew to the original position between the Harrodsburg road and Chaplin's Creek, and soon after sunrise were put in retreat. The trains and artillery moved upon the turnpike, the troops marching in the open fields to the right and left. The withdrawal was quickly accomplished, so that the afternoon of October 9 found the army in line of battle in front of Harrodsburg.

General Bragg left Perryville at 5 A.M. and rode direct to Harrodsburg in order to hasten the return of Kirby Smith and Withers, whom he had already recalled to that point. These commands, as has been intimated, found no Federal force of consequence. Withers had come in contact with the rear of Sill's division on its march from Frankfort, by way of Lawrenceburg, to join Buell at Perryville, and had captured several hundred wagons; beyond this, the expedition had been fruitless. General Humphrey Marshall at last had reached Lexington, but his stay was short-lived, as he was ordered to follow Kirby Smith's movement with a view to a junction with the army at Harrodsburg. Summarizing now the events of this act of the campaign, we find that General Bragg had sent 36,000 men toward Frankfort to oppose 12,000 men, detaching Polk at the same time with 16,000 men toward Perryville to oppose 58,000 men, the distance between these two fields of action being about twenty-five miles.

The battle of Perryville appears to have been conspicuous for feats of individual gallantry upon both sides, one of the most interesting of these incidents being the behavior of the stripling Lieutenant-Colonel C. C. Parsons, who commanded a battery of light artillery in Jackson's ill-fated division of McCook's corps.

The story, as related the night of the battle, was that, gallantly maintaining his position, he inflicted fearful

loss upon the Confederate line as it swept up the crest of the hill upon which stood his battery. His cannoneers, together with the infantry supports, had been well-nigh annihilated by the volleys which Cheatham's division poured in upon them. Parsons and another commissioned officer were all that were left at the guns. As though realizing that all hope of life was gone, but too brave to turn and flee, Parsons dropped the point of his uplifted sword and stood at "parade rest" amidst the wreck of his battery. Instantly every musket flew up, and with a cheer for the indomitable youth, the Confederate line rushed by. Little effort was made to hold him, so that in the confusion of the moment he readily escaped to his own lines.

Some years after the war, the same colonel entered the ministry of the Episcopal Church, and was called to minister in the city of Memphis. The scourge of yellow fever was then moving up the Mississippi Valley, sparing neither age nor rank. It found this man at his post, this time ministering to the wants of a people but yesterday his foes. Day and night, unmindful of himself, he stood amidst the dead and dying, unflinching as before. But the plague, less merciful than war, swept over him, and that gallant spirit went out amidst the sorrowing tears of the people for whom he now laid down his life.

Another feature of the battle was the unintentional mixing of Confederate and Federal troops upon McCook's right in the interval which existed between the two corps. It occurred with the reinforcements sent by Gilbert to McCook's aid. Colonel Gooding, for instance, seeking for orders as to where to place his brigade, rode up to General Polk, and, under the impression that he was addressing General McCook, said, "I have come to

your assistance with my brigade." Asking the name of the command, and receiving an answer, General Polk replied, "There is some mistake about this, and you are a prisoner." The effect of Colonel Gooding's capture was to keep his brigade inactive for some time, as it was unaware of his fate and naturally awaited his return; but finally it went into action, and, judging from all the information obtainable upon the subject, directly opposite the left of the Confederate advance line. General Polk had kept himself mainly upon this part of the field, as it was the most vulnerable, and about dark came very near presenting himself as an exchange for Colonel Gooding. The account of the incident is given in his own words as narrated to Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle of the Coldstream Guards, British army:

I got out of General Polk the story of his celebrated adventure with the —— regiment, which resulted in the almost total destruction of that corps. I had often during my travels heard officers and soldiers talking of this extraordinary feat of the bishop. The modest yet graphic manner in which General Polk related this wonderful instance of coolness and bravery was extremely interesting, and I now repeat it as nearly as I can in his own words:

"Well, sir, it was at the battle of Perryville, late in the evening—in fact it was almost dark—when Liddell's brigade came into action.

"Shortly after its arrival I observed a body of men whom I believed to be Confederates standing at an angle to this brigade and firing obliquely at the newly arrived troop. I said, 'Dear me, this is very sad, and must be stopped,' so I turned round, but could find none of my young men, who were absent on different messages, so I determined to ride myself and settle the matter. Having cantered up to the colonel of the regiment which was firing, I asked him in angry tones what he meant by shooting his friends, and I desired him to cease doing so at once. He answered with

surprise, 'I don't think there can be any mistake about it. I am sure they are the enemy.' 'Enemy,' I said; 'why, I have only just left them myself—cease firing, sir; what is your name, sir?' 'My name is Colonel ——, of the —— ——, and pray, sir, who are you?' Then for the first time I saw to my astonishment that he was a Federal and that I was in the rear of the Federal line. Well, I saw there was no hope but to brazen it out, my dark blouse and the increasing obscurity befriending me, so I approached quite close to him and shook my fist in his face, saying, 'I'll soon show you who I am. Cease firing at once.' I then turned my horse and cantered slowly down the line, shouting in an authoritative manner to the Yankees to cease firing. At the same time I experienced a disagreeable sensation like screwing up my back, and calculating how many bullets would lie between my shoulders every moment; I was afraid to increase my pace until I got to a small copse, when I put the spurs in and galloped back to my men. I immediately went up to the nearest colonel and said to him, 'Colonel, I have reconnoitered those fellows pretty closely, and there is no mistake as to who they are. You may get up and go at them.'"

The work was soon accomplished, the result being the almost complete destruction of the enemy's command.[1]

General Bragg's forces, which now were superior to General Buell's in material and, with the arrival of Marshall, nearly equal in numbers, were assembled at Harrodsburg on the 10th; but he could not make up his mind to assume the offensive, evincing, in fact, a perplexity and vacillation which had now become simply appalling to Smith, to Hardee, and to Polk. As it was evident that Buell would continue his movement against the communications of the Confederate army, moving by his right flank, the forces were retired finally to Bryantsville, the point designated as the temporary base.

[1] Liddell's official report, "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1159.

General Buell, still moving by the right, now threatened to occupy, at Crab Orchard, the line to Cumberland Gap and East Tennessee. The prompt determination of a definite plan of action became, therefore, an urgent question in the Confederate camp. A council of war was consequently called by General Bragg, several plans were suggested, but the weight of opinion was in favor of evacuating Kentucky. This course was in keeping with the commanding general's views; the retreat from the State was therefore ordered. On October 13, Kirby Smith with the Army of Kentucky, and Polk with the Army of Mississippi, preceded by long trains of captured stores, marched in the direction of East Tennessee. General Bragg remained with the army until it reached London, leaving the conduct of the retreat in the main to Polk and Smith. At London he turned over the command to General Polk and rode direct to the railroad in East Tennessee, going thence to Richmond, where he made his report to the government.

General Buell's pursuit was stubbornly contested by Wheeler and John Morgan. Finding that the Confederate army had eluded him, he halted his main force and sent General Thomas with Crittenden's corps to continue the pursuit. This force followed as far as London only, where it was halted, and from whence it soon moved to join its companion corps on the march to Nashville.

During the retreat, Kirby Smith, who chafed under the meager results of the campaign, proposed that the army should turn upon the pursuing column of the enemy; but General Polk, although sharing General Smith's feeling, declined the proposal, as his instructions were to move to Knoxville without delay.

After a good deal of privation and much rough march-

ing, the commands, moving by separate roads, reached Cumberland Gap and passed into East Tennessee. General Smith, again in his own department, disposed his troops to protect his territory, and General Polk marched the Army of Mississippi to Knoxville, which point it reached the last day of October. About November 1 General Bragg returned from Richmond and resumed the command of the Army of Mississippi, which he then transferred by rail to Murfreesboro in Middle Tennessee, a point then held by General Breckinridge. The occupation of this position, completed early in December, was the closing act of the Kentucky campaign. On November 3 General Polk was directed by General Bragg to proceed to Richmond and report to the President. Mr. Davis had ordered his presence that he might obtain further information concerning the conduct of the campaign. Many plain questions were asked and as plainly answered, the situation demanding the utmost candor. General Polk stated, with all respect to General Bragg's great abilities in the direction of organization and discipline, that he had been wanting in the higher elements of generalship in the conduct of the campaign; and that, in view of the admitted possibilities of the campaign, he considered it a failure—an opinion, he said, he believed Generals Smith and Hardee shared with him. He further said that General Bragg had lost the confidence of his generals, and, in answer to a suggestion from the President of a change of commanders, requested that General Joseph E. Johnston should be assigned to the command of the army, if a change were made.

It is needless to say that General Bragg did not share in the opinion of the campaign which his subordinates held, and while he acknowledged some of its failures, attributed them to General Polk. Failing to secure the

support from the general officers of the army necessary to the successful prosecution of charges, General Bragg wrote an official report of the campaign (May 20, 1863), in which he specifically placed the responsibility for the failure of his plans at Frankfort and Perryville upon General Polk. The government suppressed the report. How far General Bragg was correct in his charges can be learned by comparing his official report[1] with the narrative of this chapter, and then by checking both with the correspondence[2] brought out by his endeavor to secure evidence upon which to base an arrest and charges before a court-martial. Further light may also be gotten by referring to the documents to be found in the volumes of the Official Records of the Rebellion noticed in the footnotes to this chapter. Questions which are not met in any of these sources of information will find a solution in the letter which General Buell kindly wrote in answer to one addressed him by the author. This letter, together with the essential part of General Bragg's official report,[3] appears in the Appendix to this chapter.

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1088.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 1097.

3 General Bragg claims in his report that his plans were defeated first, because Polk did not move from Bardstown to the attack of the insignificant force (Sill's division) before Frankfort; second, because Polk did not rout Buell at Perryville. The report is silent as to the fact that General Bragg himself countermanded the first, and it shows that General Bragg was persistently blind to the additional fact that he had rendered the second impossible by sending Polk with 16,000 men to fight 58,000, while he himself had taken 36,000 with which to fight 12,000.

Hardee's comment was: "If you [Polk] choose to rip up the Kentucky campaign, you can tear Bragg into tatters."

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER V.

Letter from General Buell to Dr. Polk.

AIRDNE, June 24, 1879. (P. O., PARADISE, KY.)

Dear Sir: . . . I was very ill when your letter was received, and for a considerable time it remained among a mass of neglected duties. It is very late to answer it now, but I learned recently from Doctor Metcalfe that you had not yet disposed of the matter with reference to which you desired information, and I am unwilling to seem to have been either indifferent to the subject or careless about your request.

I venture, therefore, at this late day to reply to your inquiries in their order, as follows:

1st. On the afternoon and night of October 6, 1862, McCook's corps, forming the left of my army, was five miles northwest of Willisburgh, on the road from Bloomfield, with the exception of Sill's division, which was on the road from Louisville to Frankfort, probably near Shelbyville on that day. Gilbert's corps (which, moving from Louisville by the way of Shepherdsville, formed the right) and Crittenden's (which, moving by way of Mt. Washington, formed the center), having converged from Bardstown, were following the Confederate army, and encamped near Springfield on the night of the 6th.

2d. On the night of the 7th, McCook's corps, excepting Sill's division as above, was at Maxville, about twelve miles from Perryville. Gilbert's, now in the center under my personal direction, was in front of Perryville on the Springfield road, about two and a half miles off. Crittenden's, now on the right, under the immediate direction of General

Thomas, was two and a half miles south of Haysville, about twelve miles from Perryville. It was ordered to encamp that night at Haysville, which is on the road from Lebanon to Perryville, but in fact it wasted its strength and the best part of the night in marching away from the road after water. It was consequently out of timely reach of the instructions which I sent to it on the night of the 7th, and it did not substantially get into position in front of Perryville until the afternoon of the 8th. Two of its divisions were up at about twelve o'clock, and were reported at my headquarters at half-past ten o'clock. The other division was still two miles in rear.

McCook's corps in these movements was purposely held a little back, to be in supporting distance of the column on the Frankfort road, and in consequence of the uncertainty as to the point at which the main Confederate army and Kirby Smith's force would concentrate; my object being to get as much as possible on the line of any Confederate movement toward Middle Tennessee, without too much exposing my communication with Louisville to a Confederate movement on my left.

3d. On the night of the 3d the three corps were at Salt River,— Gilbert's (then the right) near Shepherdsville, Crittenden's (then the center) near Mt. Washington, and McCook's (the left) at Taylorsville, excepting Sill's division, as above stated.

4th. The strength of the three corps was about 21,000 men each on leaving Louisville. The detachment of Sill's from McCook's left the latter — for any purpose of immediate battle — about 14,000 men, or less. The whole available force, including cavalry, for a general battle at Perryville on the 8th, without any allowance for stragglers since leaving Louisville, would have been about 58,000 men, if the right and left corps had got into position according to my orders.

I cannot give you very accurate information in regard to the strength of my cavalry. The principal part of the force operating with the army at Perryville consisted of perfectly raw Kentucky regiments which I found at Louisville on my

arrival. I reckon it to have been about 1500 or 2000 strong.

The older force, which numbered 1200 or 1500, and which came with me from Tennessee, was halted at Elizabethtown, partly to observe in that direction the Confederate army at Bardstown, and partly in consequence of the necessity of repairing it before it could be fit for active operations with the army. The whole cavalry force was totally inadequate for the service which the occasion demanded.

5th. I marched from Bowling Green to attack Bragg at Glasgow. I should have attacked him at that point if he had been found there, or at Munfordsville if he had not moved on, or at any other point at which he might have chosen to give battle. I never thought of falling back upon Bowling Green, or of moving *via* Morgantown or any other point to the Ohio River. When Bragg, with my army close upon his rear, turned off toward Bardstown, I moved then rapidly to Louisville, both to protect that place if he should advance against it, and to increase my strength for further offensive operations.

The foregoing perhaps sufficiently answers your inquiries, but it may not be altogether uninteresting to you if I add some general remarks upon a campaign in which your distinguished father acted a prominent part.

My interpretation of Bragg's design while he was preparing his campaign at Chattanooga in the summer of 1862 differed in some respects from its execution. The immediate object, I had no doubt, was the recovery of Middle Tennessee and the occupation of Nashville. Beyond that it was not necessary to anticipate; though, if that were accomplished, the extension of the campaign into Kentucky was not an improbable purpose. I expected the operations for this object to be prompt and aggressive from the first; like those of Lee into Pennsylvania in 1862, and like those of Hood against Nashville in the closing year of the war. It was, according to my view, to be a campaign not only of bold movements for the immediate object, but of battles promptly delivered if necessary. Such a plan seemed to be in accordance with the policy of the Confederate Government at that time, and the

temper of the southern people. I do not say that it would have been any more successful, for that was the plan which it was most in my mind to defeat.

With all the information that has since come to my knowledge, I still adhere to this view of the original plan.

The execution wavered very soon after Bragg crossed the Tennessee River, and at last—I suppose about the 1st of September—materially departed from the original idea of a direct attack. But I regarded the immediate object to be the same, though pursued by more tardy and less direct means, until the bulk of his army had crossed the Cumberland and was approaching Glasgow. After passing that point, with my army in his rear, a pitched battle or a further advance into Kentucky became inevitable, whatever may have been the original plan. You may have the means of knowing whether this view is correct, and I will not recite the evidence upon which my opinion is based at the time and is still entertained.

I was not much at fault, in spite of the first extravagant reports, in regard to the force which was being employed. I estimated it at 60,000 men, including Kirby Smith's force. It was not easy to tell how it was or might be divided between Chattanooga and Knoxville; but, at any rate, I expected the bulk of it, starting from East Tennessee and Chattanooga, to operate in close communication, and at length to unite for the main object in Middle Tennessee. A diversion proceeding from Knoxville toward Kentucky, requiring of me a more efficient organization of the scanty and scattered force in that State, I anticipated; and with that view, about the 20th of August, I sent General Nelson, with some artillery and a few general officers, to take command in Kentucky.

The force which I had in Middle Tennessee and Alabama did not exceed 46,000 men, and the necessity of guarding long lines of communication that were frequently broken by the partisan operations of the Confederate cavalry in a country which was not friendly reduced the force which I could concentrate at any point in advance of Nashville to 30,000 men. After the operations of the two armies had extended

to the north side of the Cumberland, my force was increased by two divisions, about 10,000 men, from General Grant.

My movements to counteract the invasion were based upon the facts and theories above described. They contemplated battle always: defensive, or defensive-offensive in the beginning, while my available force was weakest, and Bragg's designs were supposed to be direct; offensive, when my force was increased, and Bragg established his army on my communications at Glasgow and Munfordsville. But they also comprehended fully the advantage which the use of arms of precision and long range gave to that side which could choose its position and await attacks—an advantage that became more generally recognized on both sides later in the war.

This general view will explain my movements throughout. I have seen no authoritative explanation of Bragg's. My first object was to defend Middle Tennessee, and I therefore put myself always between its capital and the invading army, even when the enemy was placing himself on my line of communications. I knew that Kentucky was weak, but she was on the side of powerful succor, and, with the reinforcements which I was promised, I could follow Bragg threateningly and give him battle when the time came.

Very truly, your obedient servant,

D. C. BUELL.

DR. W. M. POLK, City of New York.

Extract from General Bragg's Official Report of May 20, 1863.

Major-General Polk, left at Bardstown in command, was directed, if pressed by a force too large to justify his giving battle, to fall back in the direction of the new depot near Bryantsville, in front of which I proposed to concentrate for action. Arriving in Lexington on the 1st of October, I met the Provisional Governor of the State, who had previously been invited to accompany me and arrange for his installation at the capitol on the 4th. The available forces of General Smith, just returned to Lexington, were ordered immediately to Frankfort. Finding but little progress had

been made in the transfer of our accumulated stores from Lexington, and learning of a heavy movement of the enemy from Louisville, I ordered Major-General Polk, in writing dated "Lexington, 10 o'clock P.M., October 2," and sent by two routes, "to move from Bardstown, with his whole available force, by way of Bloomfield, toward Frankfort, to strike the enemy in flank and rear," and informed him that Major-General Smith would attack in front.

When received at Bardstown on the 3d, the general submitted this order, which is not mentioned in his report (see Exhibit No. 1), to a council of wing and division commanders, and determined to move as originally instructed by me on leaving Bardstown.

Fortunately, notice of this determination reached me at Frankfort in time to prevent the movement against the enemy's front by General Smith, but it necessitated an entire change in my plans,—the abandonment of the capital, and the partial uncovering and ultimate loss of our stores at Lexington. Not doubting but that some imperative necessity, unknown to me, existed with the general for this departure from instructions, I conformed at once to his movements, and put General Smith's command in motion, to form the junction farther south, still covering the supplies at Lexington as far as practicable.

Proceeding rapidly to Harrodsburg myself, I was met there by Major-General Polk, on the 6th of October, with the head of the column, which had marched from Bardstown on the 3d. After a full and free conference with the general, my first views remained unchanged, and, as he reported to me at midnight of the 6th of October, when enclosing a written report from Major-General Hardee, at Perryville, "that he did not regard the enemy in large strength near there" (see Exhibit No. 2), I renewed, early on the morning of the 7th, the order to concentrate all the forces in front of the depot at Lexington. But before the order was put in full operation, information was received that the enemy, in limited force, was pressing upon General Hardee at Perryville; that he was nowhere concentrated against us, but was moving by

separate columns; his right was near Lebanon; a corps in front of Perryville; and his left two entire corps extending by way of Macksville to Frankfort, a line of at least sixty miles. This presented an opportunity, which I promptly seized, of striking him in detail.

Accordingly written orders were given to Major-General Polk, dated "Harrodsburg, October 7, 5.40 P.M.," to move Cheatham's division, now at Harrodsburg, back to Perryville, and to proceed to that point himself, "attack the enemy immediately, rout him, and then move rapidly to join Major-General Smith," as before ordered; and it was added, "No time should be lost in this movement." Meanwhile during the same day I had received repeated and urgent applications from General Smith (near Frankfort) by express, representing the enemy to be in strong force in his immediate front, and earnestly asking for reinforcements. Accordingly, Withers's division had been detached and sent to him (before receipt by me of the information from Perryville), and was already far on the way thither at the time when the movement to Perryville was ordered, and this will account for my being without the benefit of this division in the battle which ensued next day at the latter place. Major-General Polk arrived at Perryville with Cheatham's division before midnight of the 7th, and the troops were placed by General Hardee in the line of battle previously established. Our forces now in this position consisted of three divisions of infantry, about 14,500, and two small brigades of cavalry, about 1500. To this the enemy opposed one corps, Gilbert's, about 18,000 strong. Information reached me during the evening and night of the 7th at Harrodsburg, which indicated that no attack could be made on General Smith's command the next day, and I immediately changed my purpose to join him, and determined to go to Perryville. From unofficial sources I was led to fear the existence of serious misapprehension in regard to the position and strength of the enemy's forces near Perryville, as well as to the location of our supplies, supposed to be at Bryantsville, when in truth but two days' rations for the army had reached that point.

Having ordered the attack, and that no time should be lost, I was concerned at not hearing the commencement of the engagement early in the morning, but was much relieved for the time by receiving from General Polk a note dated "Perryville, 6 A.M., 8th Oct.," informing me that the enemy's pickets commenced firing at daylight, and that he should bring on the engagement vigorously. To my surprise, however, no gun was heard, and on my arrival, about 10 A.M., I was informed that it was determined not to attack, but to assume the "defensive-offensive." After a hasty reconnoissance and consultation, orders were given for some changes deemed necessary in the line of battle; a portion of it, being withdrawn, was restored, and Major-General Polk was ordered to bring on the engagement. Impatient at the delay after this order, I dispatched a staff-officer to repeat it to the general, and soon thereafter I followed in person and put the troops in motion.

Major-General Buell, commanding the forces there in our immediate front, in his official report says: "I had somewhat expected an attack early in the morning on Gilbert's corps, while it was isolated." These delays had postponed the action until it was now past noon, and a second corps of the enemy (18,000) had reached the field. The general officers at the meeting about daylight (see General Polk's report), who resolved on this delay, must have acted without correct information, and in ignorance that my orders were urgent and imperative for the attack; moreover, I was within one hour's ride and was not consulted or informed.

The official report written by General Bragg October 12, 1862, should be read in connection with this report. See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1087.

CHAPTER VI.

MURFREESBORO AND TULLAHOMA.

DECEMBER, 1862, TO JUNE, 1863.

A visit from the President.—The marriage of General John Morgan.—The battle of Murfreesboro.—Strength of opposing forces.—Disadvantages of the field.—Extracts from General Polk's report.—The call for Breckinridge's brigades by Hardee and Polk.—Assault of Breckinridge's division and its disastrous result, January 2.—Killed and wounded on either side.—General Polk and his division commanders advise retreat.—General Bragg determines to hold his own.—Recedes from the resolve and decides upon retreat.—Council of general officers.—Retreat to be immediate.—Army falls back to Shelbyville and Tullahoma.—Correspondence between General Bragg and Generals Polk, Hardee, Breckinridge, Cleburne, and Cheatham.—General Polk's note to President Davis.—General Johnston ordered to investigate causes of discontent; assumes temporary command of the army.—Polk renews the effort to secure him as permanent commander.—An eye to the *morale* of the army.—Story of the chaplains.—The Tullahoma campaign.—Chattanooga.

General Polk remained in Richmond a few days, and then went to Raleigh with a view of temporarily settling his family, whose sojourn after the burning of their dwelling had been changing with the Confederate line. Having left Nashville when it was evacuated in consequence of the retreat from Bowling Green under Sidney Johnston, they went to New Orleans, and upon its fall, or as soon as they were able to leave, they came out of General Butler's line to seek such shelter as might be obtained within Confederate sway.

After an absence of two weeks General Polk, who meanwhile had received his commission as lieutenant-

general, rejoined the army, now encamped in the vicinity of Murfreesboro; the Federal army, after the vain pursuit of the forces under General Polk through eastern Kentucky, having been concentrated at Nashville, with General Rosecrans, in place of General Buell, as the chief in command.

Two events now took place which attracted no little attention at the time. One was a visit to the army from President Davis; the other was the marriage of General John Morgan, the celebrated cavalry commander. Both occurrences are mentioned in the following extract from a letter to Mrs. Polk, dated December 17:

> We have had a royal visit, from a royal visitor. The President himself has been with us. He arrived on Friday, reviewed my corps of three divisions on Saturday, dined with a party of general officers at Bragg's, and left on Sunday. The review was a great affair; everything went off admirably, and he was highly gratified with the result—said they were the best-appearing troops he had seen, well appointed and well clad. The sight was very imposing, and, as it was my corps, very gratifying to me, as you may suppose. There was some correspondent of the *Rebel* at Chattanooga who came with the President, and who gave his account of the spectacle; I cut it out and enclose it to you. We had a great wedding the other day, as you will also see by the accompanying notice. It was no other than the redoubtable John Morgan. He was married, as you see, by a lieutenant-general, a select company present—Generals Bragg, Hardee, Breckinridge, Cheatham, etc. It is an historical event.[1]

In accordance with his settled determination to carefully avoid all public exercise of his priestly functions, General Polk at first thought to decline the request

[1] The account of this marriage given in Bryant's "History of the United States," and its statements as to the part borne by General Polk, it is needless to say, are fictitious.

which was made him to act upon that occasion; but upon reflection he concluded to gratify the gallant general, who at Hartsville had just accomplished a brilliant feat in the capture of the position with a large number of prisoners, and who then was upon the eve of departing upon an expedition into Kentucky, for the purpose of harassing the communications of the enemy.

The visit which Mr. Davis made to this department at this period was the more important because it was the first time he had personally inspected the army in the west, its field of operation and its resources; and such was his influence that this visit was counted upon by many as a means of checking the discontent in the army and among the people, due to the disappointments of the military operations just closed. It is difficult to state how far these anticipations were realized as regards the people, but they were fully realized as regards the army, for the enthusiasm which his presence and cheering words created gave an assurance of a greater success than was to be attained in the battle soon to be fought at Murfreesboro.

In this battle, as at Perryville, there was desperate fighting on both sides, great carnage, and a result hardly proportionate to the loss involved.

But we leave the battle in its details to the general historian. Our duty will be confined to mentioning such general matter connected with it as may be necessary to explain the part taken in it by the forces under General Polk.

General Rosecrans moved on Murfreesboro with 46,940 men, and fought the battle with 43,400.

The army under him was divided into three corps: General McCook's, consisting of three divisions, under Johnston, Davis, and Sheridan; General Thomas's, con-

sisting of two divisions, under Negley and Rousseau; and General Crittenden's, composed of three divisions, under Wood, Palmer, and Van Cleve.

General Bragg's army was divided into two corps of two divisions each, commanded by Generals Polk and Hardee; a reserve division of three brigades under General McCown; and the cavalry under Generals Wheeler, Wharton, and Pegram: the whole numbering 37,712 men,—about 10,000 men less than the force opposed to him during the campaign. This difference in the relative number of the forces should be borne in mind, because the statement that General Rosecrans fought the battle with 43,400 men might be construed as indicating the number employed throughout the movement. Such was not the case, however, the actual number brought to bear at Murfreesboro being 46,940.

The Federal army occupied Nashville, its right extending toward Franklin and its left toward Lebanon. General Bragg's center was at Murfreesboro under General Polk, his right at Reedyville under General McCown, and his left at Triune and Eagleville under General Hardee. Such was the situation of the armies when information was received, on the 26th of December, that Rosecrans was advancing. This was soon made evident by heavy demonstrations upon the outposts.

General Bragg having decided to accept battle and to defend Murfreesboro, all the forces were concentrated at that point by the 28th.

The position the commanding general of the Confederate forces determined to occupy, and from which to assume the offensive, seems to have been more favorable to the enemy than to the troops under him. Hardee, in his report, says of it:

The field of battle offered no peculiar advantages for defense. The open fields beyond the town being fringed with dense cedar brakes, which offered excellent shelter for approaching infantry, and was almost impervious to artillery. The country on every side was entirely open and accessible to the enemy.

The field thus described lay some two and a half miles northwest of Murfreesboro, and was intersected by three turnpike roads, known respectively as the Triune or Franklin road, the Wilkinson and the Nashville roads. Stone River, between the town and the battlefield, flows through low banks of limestone, which are steep and in some places difficult to pass, and it gradually trends to the north as a tributary of the Cumberland. At the beginning of the battle this stream could be forded at any point without difficulty by infantry, but the usual winter rains of the region would swell it in a few hours to an impassable torrent — a fact that was soon to be realized.

Owing to a wide bend which it made opposite the town, Stone River may be said to have covered the rear and the right of the position ultimately taken by General Bragg, and upon which the battle was chiefly fought.

A reference to the map will show that the railroad to Nashville, after crossing the river, ran alongside of it for some twelve hundred yards, then, owing to a sharp turn of the stream to the east, the relation was lost. At the point of divergence the railroad track, running through a deep cut, was not more than one hundred yards from the river, whose banks just here happened to be highest on the west side (the side of the railroad). With this river bluff on the one side, and the deep railroad cut on the other, the narrow intervening space could be easily held by a resolute force. It was here

that General Rosecrans placed his left, and it was this point which determined the battle in his favor.

At the time of the battle this space was covered with forest trees, which extended thence as far as the Nashville turnpike, some one hundred yards to the west. It is called in official reports the "Round Forest," but was known to the soldiers as "Hell's Half Acre."

General Rosecrans completed his formation on the afternoon of December 30. His left rested upon Stone River at the Round Forest, extending a little to the east of the forest along the river-bank, which here overlooked the opposite shore. The line extended thence in a southwesterly direction across the Nashville and Wilkinson turnpikes to the Franklin road, along which it ran for a short distance, and then turned west and rested upon the southern side of this latter road. With its right thus well refused and its left resting upon the river, the position of the Federal army seemed reasonably secure; and, in view of the fact that it had to conform to the Confederate line already formed, it was well placed. McCook's corps with three divisions held the right, Thomas with two divisions held the center, and Crittenden with three divisions the left. General Rosecrans planned to hold his right in position and attack with his left, crossing the river for that purpose. General Bragg the same night planned to hold his right in position and attack with his left. The one that struck first would probably be the one to carry out his plan. On the morning of the 31st both moved about the same time, but as General Bragg had the shorter distance to go his blow fell first. From that time on General Rosecrans had to conform his plan of action to General Bragg's. He did it so well that ultimately he held the field, and if he had never done anything else his conduct at Murfrees-

boro should secure him a high place as a commanding general.

These general considerations are sufficient as an introduction to the essential parts of General Polk's report of the engagement.

On the evening of the 28th my brigades struck their tents and retired their baggage trains to the rear, and on the morn- of the 29th they were placed in line of battle.

As the brigade composing the division of Major-General Withers had not been engaged in any heavy battles since Shiloh, I placed them in the first line. They extended from the river near the intersection of the Nashville turnpike and railroad, southward across the Wilkinson pike to the Triune or Franklin road, in a line irregular, but adapted to the topography.

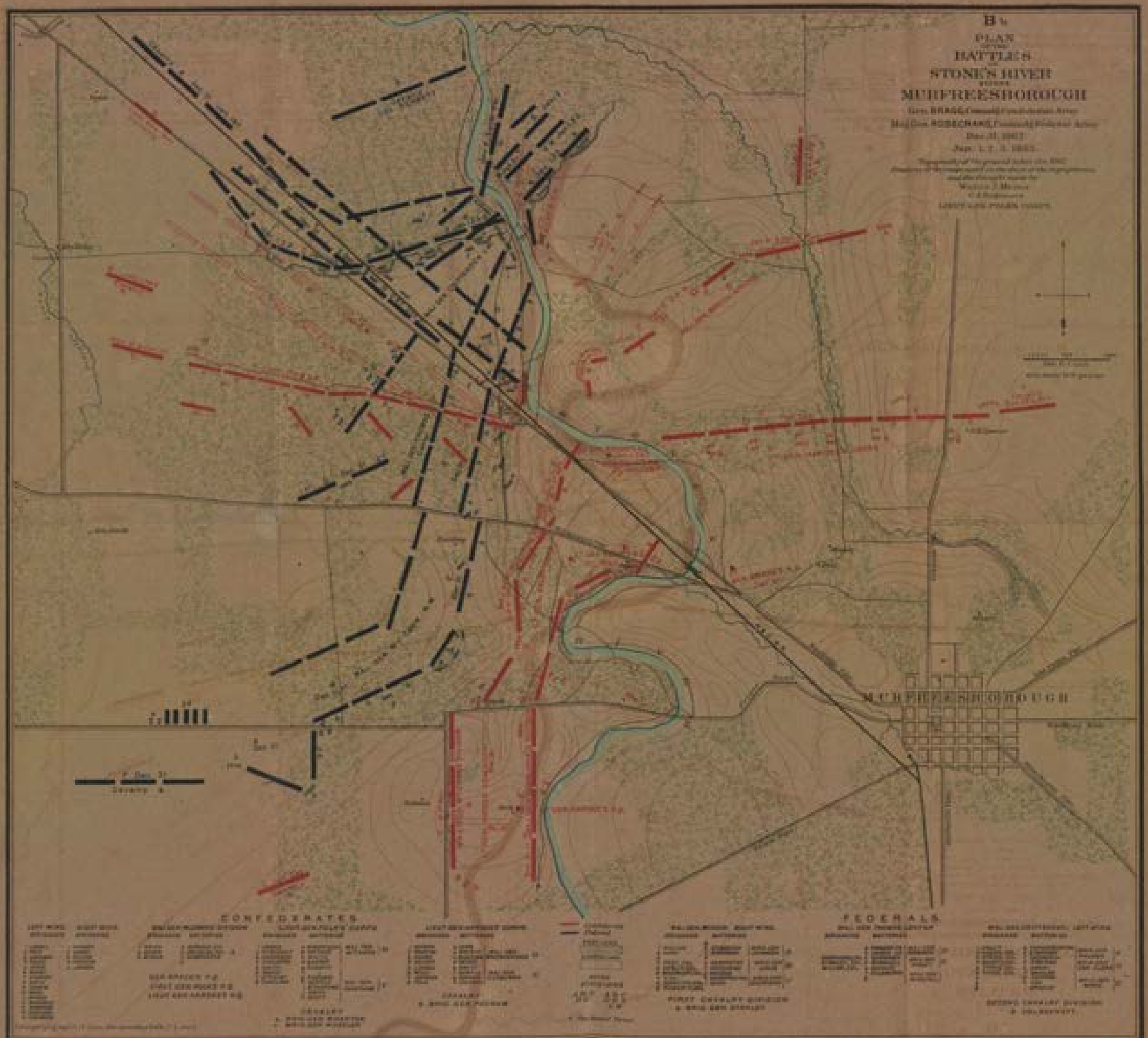
The division of Major-General Cheatham was posted in the rear of Major-General Withers as a supporting force. The division of Major-General McCown, of Lieutenant-General Kirby Smith's army corps, was in prolongation of that of Major-General Withers on the left, having that of Major-General Cleburne, of Lieutenant-General Hardee's corps, as its supporting force. Major-General Breckinridge's division of Lieutenant-General Hardee's corps occupied the ground on the east side of the river, in the line of Major-General Withers on the right.

The enemy moved forward, and our outposts fell back slowly, and took their place in the line of battle on the 29th.

On the 30th, in order to discover the position at which we proposed to offer battle, he moved up cautiously, shelling his front heavily as he advanced.

The cannonading was responded to along our line, and the theater of the impending conflict was speedily determined.

On the left of my line the skirmishing became very active, and my left brigade's front and rear became hotly engaged with the line which was being formed immediately before them. The enemy pressed forward very heavily, with both artillery and infantry, and a sharp contest ensued, in which he


B 6
PLAN
OF THE
BATTLES
NEAR
STONE'S RIVER
AND
MURFREESBOROUGH
Dec. 31. 1862.
Jan. 1. 2. 3. 1863.
MURFREESBOROUGH
CONFEDERATES
FEDERALS

attempted with several regiments to take one of my batteries by assault, but was repulsed in the most decisive manner.

In the preliminary onset many lives were lost on both sides. It was, from its severity, an introduction to the great battle of the ensuing day, and prepared our troops for the work before them. Twilight following soon after, the enemy settled around his bivouac fires for the night.

Orders were issued by the general commanding to attack in the morning at daybreak. The attack was to be made by the extreme left, and the whole line was ordered to swing around from left to right upon my right brigade as a pivot.

Major-General Breckinridge, on the extreme right and across the river, was to hold the enemy in observation on that flank.

At the appointed time the battle opened, evidently to the surprise of the opposing army. Major-General McCown, who was acting under the orders of Lieutenant-General Hardee, was upon them before they were prepared to receive him. He captured several batteries and one brigadier-general, wounded another, and drove three brigades — those composing the division of Brigadier-General Johnston — in confusion before him.

He was followed quickly by Major-General Cleburne, as a supporting force, who occupied the space left vacant by the forward movement of McCown, between the left of my front line and McCown's right. Opposing him in that space was the right half of the second division of Major-General McCook's corps, under command of Brigadier-General Jefferson C. Davis, to confront which he had to wheel to the right, as the right of General McCook's corps was slightly refused. Cleburne's attack, following so soon on that of McCown, caught the force in his front also not altogether prepared, and the vigor of the assault was so intense that they too yielded and were driven.

Major-General Withers's left was opposed to the left half of General Davis's division, and to the whole of General Sheridan's, commanding the Third and remaining division of General McCook's corps. The enemy's right was strongly

posted on a ridge of rocks, with chasms intervening, and covered with a dense growth of rough cedars. Being advised of the attack he was to expect by the fierce contest which was being waged on his right, he was fully prepared for the onset, and this notice and the strength of his position enabled him to offer a strong resistance to Withers, whose duty it was to move next.

Colonel Loomis, who commanded the left brigade, moved up with energy and spirit to the attack. He was wounded, and was succeeded by Colonel Coltart. The enemy met the advance with firmness, but was forced to yield. An accession of force enabled him to recover his position, and its great strength enabled him to hold it. Coltart, after a gallant charge and a sharp contest, fell back and was replaced by Colonel Vaughn of Major-General Cheatham's division of the rear line. Vaughn, notwithstanding the difficulties of the ground, charged the position with great energy, but the enemy, entrenched behind stones covered by the thick woods, could not be moved, and Vaughn also was repulsed.

This caused a loss of time, and Cleburne's division, pressing forward, reached a point where Davis's batteries, still unmoved, by wheeling to the right enfiladed it.[1] Colonel Vaughn was speedily reorganized and returned to the assault, and in conjunction with Colonel Coltart drove at the position with resistless courage and energy; and, although their losses were very heavy, the enemy could not bear up against the onset. He was dislodged and driven with the rest of the flying battalions of McCook's corps.

The brigade lost one third of all its forces. It captured two of the enemy's field-guns.

The brigade of Colonel Manigault, which was immediately on the right of that of Colonel Coltart, followed the move-

1 While Cheatham was making these assaults upon Davis, General Hardee pressed forward, and his right flank became exposed to the fire of a brigade which Davis had here refused. Hardee reported the fact to General Bragg, who, unaware of the cause, inferred that Cheatham had not attacked. He wrote his report before he received those of his corps and division commanders, and in this way perpetuated the error.

ment of the latter according to instructions. But as Coltart failed in the first onset to drive Davis's left, Manigault, after dashing forward and pressing the enemy's line,—Sheridan's division,—in his front, back upon his second line, was brought under a very heavy fire of artillery from two batteries on his right, supported by a heavy infantry force. He was therefore compelled to fall back.

In this charge the brigade suffered severely, sustaining a heavy loss in officers and men; but the gallant South Carolinian returned to the charge a second and a third time, and, being aided by the brigade of General Maney, of the second line, which came to his relief with its heavy Napoleon guns and a deadly fire of musketry, the enemy gave way and joined his comrades on the right, in their precipitate retreat across the Wilkinson pike. This movement dislodged and drove back Sheridan's division, and completed the forcing of the whole of McCook's corps out of its line of battle and placed it in full retreat. The enemy left one of his batteries, of four guns, on the field, which fell into the hands of Maney's brigade. . . .

The front of Manigault and Maney being free, they swung round with our lines on the left, and joined in pressing the enemy and his reinforcements in the cedar-brake.

At 9 A.M. Brigadier-General Patton Anderson, on Manigault's right, moved in conjunction with this brigade upon the line in its front. That line rested with its right near the Wilkinson pike, and is understood to have been General Negley's division of General Thomas's corps, which constituted the center of the enemy's line of battle. This division, with that of Rousseau in reserve, was posted on the edge of a dense cedar-brake, with an open space in front, and occupied a position of strength not inferior to that held by Davis's left. His batteries, which occupied commanding positions and enabled him to sweep the open field in his front, were served with admirable skill and vigor, and were strongly supported. Anderson moved forward with his brigade with firmness and decision. The fire of the enemy, of both artillery and infantry, was terrific, and his left for a moment wavered. Such evi-

dences of destructive firing as were left on the forest from which this brigade emerged have rarely, if ever, been seen. The timber was torn and crushed. Nothing but a charge could meet the demands of the occasion. Orders were given to take the batteries at all hazards, and it was done. They were carried in gallant style. Artillerists were captured at their pieces, a large number of whom, and of their infantry supports, were killed upon the spot, and one company entire, with its officers and colors, was captured. The number of field-guns captured in this movement was eight, which together with four others, from which the gunners had been driven by the heavy firing from Maney's long-range guns and Manigault's musketry on the left, made twelve taken on that part of the field. This was one of the points at which we encountered the most determined opposition, but the onward movement of the Mississippians and Alabamans was irresistible, and they swept the enemy before them, driving him into the dense cedar-brake to join the extending line of fugitives.

This work, however, was not done without a heavy loss of officers and men.

The supporting brigade of General Anderson, commanded by Brigadier-General Stewart, moved with that of Anderson. It was ordered by the division commander, Major-General Withers,—who was in command of Major-General Cheatham's two right brigades, as Major-General Cheatham was of his two left,—to move to the support of the left regiments of Anderson, which were pressed. These regiments, which had suffered greatly, he replaced, and, moving forward, attacked the enemy and his reinforcements on Anderson's left. After strong resistance they were driven back, shattered and in confusion, to join the hosts of their flying comrades in their retreat through the cedars. In their flight they left two of their field-guns, which fell into the hands of Stewart's brigades.

Brigadier-General Chalmers's brigade, the remaining one of those constituting my front line, whose right flank rested on the river, was the last to move. This brigade, owing to its position in the line, was called on to encounter a measure of personal suffering from exposure beyond that of any other in

my corps. The part of the line that it occupied lay across an open field, in full view of the enemy, and in range of his field-guns. It had thrown up a slight rifle-pit behind which it was placed, and to escape observation it was necessary for it to lie down and abstain from building fires. In this position it remained awaiting the opening of the battle for more than forty-eight hours, wet with rain and chilled with cold; added to this the enemy's shot and shell were constantly passing over it. Not a murmur of discontent was heard to escape those who composed it. They exhibited the highest capacity of endurance and firmness in the most discouraging circumstances.

In its front lay the right of Brigadier-General Palmer's division of Major-General Crittenden's corps, which constituted the left wing of the enemy's line of battle.

The general movement from the left having reached Chalmers's brigade at ten o'clock, it was ordered to the attack, and its reserve, under Brigadier-General Donelson, was directed to move forward with support. The charge was made in fine style, and met by the enemy, who was strongly posted in the edge of the cedar-brake, with a murderous fire of artillery and infantry. In this charge their brigade commander, General Chalmers, was severely wounded by a shell, which disqualified him for further duty on the field. The regiments on the left recoiled and fell back; those of the right were moved to the left to hold their place, and were pressed forward. The brigade of General Donelson, having been ordered forward to Chalmers's support, moved with steady step upon the enemy's position, and attacked it with great energy. The slaughter was terrific on both sides in this charge, which resulted in breaking the enemy's line at every point except at his extreme left, and driving him as every other part of his lines attacked had been driven. Donelson reports the capture of eleven guns and about one thousand prisoners. The regiments of Chalmers's brigade, having been separated after he fell, moved forward and attached themselves to other commands, fighting with them with gallantry as opportunity offered.

There was no instance of more distinguished bravery exhibited during the battle than was shown by the command of General Donelson. In the charge which it made it was brought directly under the fire of several batteries strongly posted and supported, which it assaulted with eager resolution. All the line in the front was carried except the extreme right.

This point, which was the key to the enemy's position, and was known as the Round Forest, was attacked by the right of the brigade. It was met by a fire from artillery and musketry, which mowed down more than half its number. The 16th Regiment Tennessee Volunteers, under the command of Colonel John H. Savage, lost 207 out of 402. It could not advance and would not retire. Their colonel, with characteristic bravery and tenacity, deployed what was left of his command as skirmishers, and held his position for three hours. In the 8th Tennessee, of the right wing, under the lamented Colonel Moore, who fell mortally wounded, and who was succeeded by Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Anderson, the loss was 306 men and officers out of 425.

The enemy was now driven from the field at all points occupied by him in the morning, along his whole line from his right to his extreme left, and was pressed back until our line occupied a position at right angles to that which was held at the opening of the battle. After passing the Nashville and Murfreesboro turnpike, his flight was met by large bodies of fresh troops and numerous batteries of artillery, and the advance of our exhausted columns was checked.

His extreme left alone held its position. This occupied a piece of ground well chosen and defended, the river being on the one hand and a deep railroad cut on the other. It was held by a strong force of artillery and infantry, well supported by a reserve composed of Brigadier-General Wood's division.

My last reserve having been exhausted, the brigades of Major-General Breckinridge's division and a small brigade of General J. K. Jackson's, posted to guard our right flank, were the only troops left that had not been engaged. Four of these

were ordered to report to me. They came in detachments of two brigades each, the first arriving near two hours after Donelson's attack, the other about an hour after the first. The commanders of these detachments—the first composed of the brigades of Generals Adams and Jackson, the second (under General Breckinridge in person) consisting of the brigade of General Preston and Colonel Palmer—had pointed out to them the particular object to be accomplished, to wit: to drive in the enemy's left, and especially to dislodge him from his position in the Round Forest. Unfortunately, the opportune moment for putting in these detachments had passed.

Could they have been thrown upon the enemy's left, immediately following Chalmers's and Donelson's assault, in quick succession, the extraordinary strength of his position would have availed him nothing. That point would have been carried, and his left, driven back on his panic-stricken right, would have completed his confusion and ensured an utter rout. It was, however, otherwise, and the time lost between Donelson's attack and the coming up of these detachments in succession enabled the enemy to recover his self-possession, to mass a number of heavy batteries, and concentrate a strong infantry force on the position, and thus make a successful attack very difficult. Nevertheless the brigades of Adams and Jackson assailed the enemy's line with energy, and after a severe combat were compelled to fall back. They were promptly rallied by General Breckinridge, who, having preceded his other brigades, reached the ground at that moment; but as they were very much cut up they were not required to renew the attack.

The brigades of Preston and Palmer, on arriving, renewed the assault with the same undaunted determination, but as another battery had been added, since the previous attack, to a position already strong and difficult of access, this assault was alike ineffectual. The enemy, though not driven from his position, was severely punished, and as the day was far spent it was not deemed advisable to renew the attack that evening, and the troops held the line they occupied for the night. The following morning, instead of finding him in

position to receive a renewal of the attack, showed that, taking advantage of the night, he had abandoned the last position of his first line, and the opening of the new year found us masters of the field.

The battle of the 31st of December developed, in all parts of the field which came under my observation, the highest qualities of the soldier among our troops. The promptness with which they moved upon the enemy whenever they were called to attack him, the vigor and *élan* with which their movements were made, the energy with which they assaulted his strong positions, and the readiness with which they responded to the call to repeat their assaults, indicated a spirit of dauntless courage which places them in the very front rank of the soldiers of the world. For the exhibition of these high traits they are not a little indebted to the example of their officers, whose courage and energy had won their confidence and admiration.

The 1st of January passed without any material movement on either side, beyond occasional skirmishing along the lines in our front. I ordered Chalmers's brigade, now commanded by Colonel White, to occupy the ground in rear of the Round Forest just abandoned by the enemy. This it did, first driving out his pickets.

On the 2d there was skirmishing during the morning. In the afternoon, about three o'clock, General Bragg announced his intention to attack the enemy, who was supposed to be in force on the north side of the river, and ordered me to relieve two of General Breckinridge's brigades, which were still in my front, and send them over to that officer, who had returned to his post, as he proposed to make the attack with the troops of Breckinridge's division. I issued the necessary orders at once, and the troops were transferred as directed. The general commanding ordered me also to open fire with three batteries, which had been placed in Chalmers's line, to distract the enemy at the time of Breckinridge's attack, and to shell out of the woods which covered his line of movement any sharpshooters who might annoy him while approaching the river.

The shelling ordered, which was to be the signal for Breckinridge's advance, was promptly executed, and the woods were cleared. Of the particulars of this movement General Breckinridge will speak in his own report.

When the firing of my batteries was opened as above, there was a forward movement of the enemy's infantry upon my pickets in the Round Forest, and a sharp conflict which lasted for some time and ended in the enemy regaining possession of the forest. The position being of much value to us, I found it necessary to regain it, and gave the requisite orders. On the following morning I ordered a heavy fire of artillery from several batteries to open upon it, and, after it had been thoroughly shelled, detachments from the brigades of Colonels White and Coltart charged it with the bayonet at double quick and put the enemy to flight, clearing it of his regiments, and capturing a lieutenant-colonel and thirteen men.

The enemy, however, knew the importance of the position also, and was occupied during the day in throwing up earthworks for the protection of batteries within reach.

These being completed, he reopened fire from three points, with batteries of heavy guns, and placed it under a concentrated fire for many minutes. It was a severe ordeal, and was followed by a charge of a heavy force of infantry. But our gallant troops met the advance with firmness, and after a severely contested struggle drove back the advancing column with slaughter and held possession of the coveted position.

This contest closed the operations of my corps in the field in front of Murfreesboro.

By orders from the general commanding, after being eight days under arms and in actual battle of heavy skirmishing, in the rain and cold, without tents, and much of the time without fires, my troops were retired from the field, and ordered to take a position near Shelbyville. This they did at their leisure and in perfectly good order.

In all the operations in which they were engaged no troops ever displayed greater gallantry or higher powers of endurance. They captured 1500 prisoners and 26 guns.

A reference to the report of General Hardee will show the brilliant work accomplished by his two divisions upon the right flank and rear of the Federal army. He carried everything before him from the left forward and to the right, until, in conjunction with Polk, the Federal army was forced back to a position at right angles to that which it occupied at the beginning of the battle.

It is true that he met with less resistance than General Polk, yet but for the masterly handling of his divisions Polk's success would have fallen short of what he actually accomplished.

General Polk's advance was an unremitting contest all through the day till late in the afternoon. Attacking from left to right successively, his enemy, strongly posted, and warned by the approaching roar of battle, was always ready to receive him, whether attacked upon front or flank. Driving before it such stubborn fighters as Sheridan and Thomas, his corps made a magnificent display of enduring courage from one end of its line to the other. Finally, emerging from the cedars, it allied itself with its companion corps, and together they bore down upon the new line to which the Federal army had been driven. This line, placed along the cover of the railroad track, had been constructed by General Rosecrans with marvelous rapidity and dexterity. Placing his reserves, he supported them with his artillery, and as his broken divisions emerged from the cedars he gave them this nucleus upon which they were speedily aligned. Here he offered such stubborn resistance that Polk and Hardee could go no farther. But, in spite of all this, victory might have still been won could General Bragg have utilized his reserves as General Rosecrans had done his. General Bragg did not fail to see the necessity for such action, and had he done so Polk and Hardee would

have warned him. Hardee asked for Breckinridge upon the left flank early in the action, and Polk, seeing the strength of the Federal position at the Round Forest, upon two separate occasions, and in ample time before he attacked, asked that Breckinridge might be sent him for use at that point. Could the Federal line have been dislodged here before two o'clock, it is difficult to believe that it could have maintained any position in front of General Bragg's army that day.

Breckinridge, however, could not be sent forward in time. He was held back because of erroneous reports as to the presence of a large body of the enemy upon the east side of Stone River, and when he arrived General Polk had already shattered his right upon the coveted position, leaving Rosecrans, better prepared than ever, to continue the resistance. The erroneous reports which thus aided so materially in the discomfiture of the Confederate army were the outcome of the absence of Morgan's cavalry, which had so recently been sent into Kentucky. Its presence would have given sufficient cavalry force to make clear the situation and thus relieve Breckinridge.

The question has been raised as to why a heavy force of artillery was not concentrated upon the Round Forest early in the morning of the battle. The guns of the brigades contiguous to the position were used against it, and, as it turned out, many others might have been; but it is to be remembered that the batteries were acting with the brigades and were placed in line with them, to make sure of proper support in the advance. These batteries endeavored to follow their commands, and some succeeded, but many of them, in their efforts to keep pace with the advance, became entangled in the cedar thickets, and ended by accomplishing but little.

The action on the east side of the river, conducted by General Breckinridge the second day after the battle (January 2), was an isolated attack, ordered by General Bragg to secure a position occupied by the enemy the day before, and from which it was feared General Polk's right might be enfiladed. General Polk himself did not think that the position was essential to his protection, nor had he knowledge of the design to secure it until General Bragg rode over to his line to watch the attack from the high ground. He then took the liberty of advising against it, but General Bragg thought it necessary, so it was made. The attack resulted disastrously, which made it imperative to weaken the force on the west side of the river. General Polk first sent Anderson's brigade, which arrived in time to cover Breckinridge's retreat. General Hardee followed with Cleburne, and McCown was sent over some time after dark.

In consequence of this transfer of troops, General Bragg left but two divisions in position west of the river with which to oppose the Federal army, nearly all of which was still on that side of Stone River. Withers's division had sustained a loss of 28¼ per cent. in the battle, and had been further depleted by the detaching of Anderson's brigade; and Cheatham's division, while it remained intact, had sustained the frightful loss of 36 per cent., so that, all told, but 7000 infantry and artillery remained available in that wing of General Bragg's army. As night approached, rain began to fall, and it quickly became evident that the river would be unfordable before many hours, thus making very difficult any transfer of troops that might be required.

When it was known that this position was to be maintained, nothing but the most implicit confidence in General Bragg's ability to conduct the battle further could

reconcile Cheatham and Withers to the wisdom of the decision. What they heard concerning the state of Breckinridge's division that night, and knew of the condition of McCown's and Cleburne's, who had just been alongside of them, did not tend to reassurance upon the general situation. In the absence, then, of the all-essential confidence in the commanding general, and speaking only for themselves, Cheatham and Withers wrote General Bragg at 12.15 A.M., January 3, saying that they thought the army should be put promptly in retreat, adding:

> You have but three divisions that are at all reliable, and even some of these are more or less demoralized from having some brigade commanders who do not possess the confidence of their commands. Such is our opinion, and we deem it a solemn duty to express it to you. We do fear great disaster from the condition of things now existing, and think it should be averted if possible.

This note was sent through the corps commander, General Polk, who endorsed upon it:

> 1.30 A.M., January 3.
>
> *My dear General:* I send you the enclosed paper as directed, and I am compelled to add that after seeing the effect of the operations of to-day, added to that produced upon the troops by the battle of the 31st, I very greatly fear the consequences of another engagement at this place on the ensuing day. We could now, perhaps, get off with some safety and with some credit if the affair was well managed. Should we fail in the meditated attack, the consequence might be very disastrous.
>
> Hoping you may be guided aright, whatever determination you may reach,
>
> I am your obedient servant,
>
> L. POLK.

Lieutenant Richmond, General Polk's aide, took the note to General Bragg, who, upon reading it, replied, "Say to the general we shall maintain our position at every hazard."

General Polk sent the correspondence to General Hardee with General Bragg's reply, for his information, and said: "I think the decision of the general unwise, and, am compelled to add, in a high degree. I shall of course obey his orders and endeavor to do my duty. I think it due you to let you know the views of myself and my two division commanders, especially as we all believe the conflict will be severe in the morning."

The hint contained in General Polk's expression, "after seeing the effect of the operations of to-day," reveals the real reason for the solicitude which he and others felt concerning the situation at Murfreesboro. Whether the actual state of affairs in the army justified this solicitude may be determined by referring to the correspondence between General Bragg and his corps and division commanders, which took place soon after the army left Murfreesboro, and to which we will again refer.

At ten o'clock on the following day General Polk met General Hardee at army headquarters. General Bragg then stated that he had reason to believe that Rosecrans's strength was greater than he had at first supposed, and as he was then receiving additional reinforcements he felt that, in view of the condition of his own army, a retreat should be made.

In this General Hardee and General Polk concurred, and that night the army withdrew. Hardee marched to Tullahoma by way of the Manchester road, and Polk retired to Shelbyville on Duck River.

General Bragg himself rode to Winchester, fifty miles from Murfreesboro, where he established his headquar-

ters, it being his intention to place his army upon the line of the Elk River. As the enemy showed no disposition to press forward, however, Polk had halted at Shelbyville, twenty miles from Murfreesboro, and reported the fact to General Bragg. He was then directed to remain at the position. Hardee was next moved up to Wartrace, and army headquarters were placed at Tullahoma. This disposition of the forces secured Duck River and the rich country through which it ran, as the line for the army, which, in view of the barren country south of it, proved of great service in maintaining it through the coming six months. In fact, had Duck River been given up to the enemy, the army could not have been fed on the line of the Elk more than two months.

The battle of Murfreesboro was fought by General Bragg with 37,712 men of all arms, with a loss of 10,266, — 27½ per cent.,— of which only 981 were missing, the remainder being killed or wounded.

In Polk's corps the percentage of loss was 31⅛ per cent., of which but 135 were missing. The loss in Cheatham's division was 36 per cent., with but 65 missing; this far exceeded the loss sustained by any command in either army.

In Hardee's corps the loss was 29⅖ per cent., including 583 missing. McCown's division lost 21⅘ per cent.

General Rosecrans, conducting the campaign with 46,940 men of all arms, sustained a loss of 13,249, of which 3717 were missing, leaving a percentage of killed and wounded considerably less than that sustained by his opponent.

There appears to be some discrepancy in the figures relating to the missing in the Federal army, because the tabulated statement showing the number of prisoners

captured by General Bragg during the battle places the number at 6273.[1] Besides this number of prisoners, General Bragg secured 30 pieces of artillery, 9 stand of colors, and 6000 stand of small arms.

During the Civil War the criticism of the newspaper press was a penalty applied ruthlessly to the commanding generals of both armies. General Bragg had already received a good share consequent upon the Kentucky campaign, and, the retreat from Murfreesboro developing it afresh, he again found himself a shining mark.

Under the irritation of this spur he sent the following circular letter[2] to his corps and division commanders:

January 11, 1863.

General: Finding myself assailed in private and public, by the press, in private circles, by officers and citizens, for the movement from Murfreesboro, which was resisted by me for some time after advised by my corps and division commanders, and only adopted after hearing of the enemy's reinforcements by large numbers from Kentucky, it becomes necessary for me to save my fair name, if I cannot stop the deluge of abuse which will destroy my usefulness and demoralize this army.

It has come to my knowledge that many of these accusations and insinuations are from staff-officers of my generals, who persistently assert that the movement was made against the opinion and advice of their chiefs, and while the enemy was in full retreat. False or true, the soldiers have no means of judging me rightly, or getting the facts, and the effect on them will be the same,—a loss of confidence, and a consequent demoralization of the whole army.

It is only through my generals that I can establish the facts as they exist. Unanimous as you were in council in verbally

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xx. pt. i. It is probable that these figures included the Federal wounded, all of whom again fell into the hands of Rosecrans.

[2] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xx, pt. i, p. 699.

advising a retrograde movement, I cannot doubt that you will cheerfully attest the same in writing. I desire that you will consult your subordinate commanders and be candid with me, as I have always endeavored to prove myself with you.

If I have misunderstood your advice and acted against your opinions, let me know it in justice to yourselves. If, on the contrary, I am the victim of unjust accusations, say so, and unite with me in staying the malignant slanders being propagated by men who have felt the sting of discipline.

General Smith has been called to Richmond,—it is supposed with a view to supersede me. I shall retire without a regret, if I find I have lost the good opinion of my generals, upon whom I have ever relied as upon a foundation of rock.

Your early attention is most desirable, and is urgently solicited.

Most respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
BRAXTON BRAGG,
General, C. S. A.

I enclose copies of a joint note received about two o'clock A.M. from Major-General Cheatham and Major-General Withers, on the night before we retired from Murfreesboro; with Lieutenant-General Polk's endorsement and my own verbal reply to Lieutenant Richmond, General Polk's aide-de-camp.

General Bragg's letter reached General Polk's headquarters on the 12th, and he being absent from the army on a short leave, General Cheatham, temporarily in command of the corps, received it. After consultation with General Withers, it was concluded to postpone a detailed reply to the communication until the subject could be discussed with General Polk. Pending his return, Cheatham, however, determined to place General Bragg's mind at rest upon the question of his willingness to assume all responsibility for the note

which he had written from the battlefield, and a copy of which, as we have seen above, General Bragg now laid before the army.

Speaking only for himself, he therefore sent the following letter:

January 13.

General: Since this army commenced falling back from Murfreesboro, I have upon all occasions, public and private, stated that I myself was one of the first to suggest the movement, and fully endorsed it.

Respectfully yours,
B. F. CHEATHAM,
Major-General.

As soon as General Hardee received General Bragg's letter he called together his commanders, and after a conference made the following reply:[1]

TULLAHOMA, TENN., January 12, 1863.

General: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of yesterday, in which, after informing me of the assaults to which you are subjected, you invoke a response in regard to the propriety of the recent retreat from Murfreesboro, and request me to consult my subordinate commanders in reference to the topics to which you refer.

You will readily appreciate the delicate character of the inquiries you institute, but I feel, under the circumstances, that it is my duty to reply with the candor you solicit, not only from personal respect to yourself, but from the magnitude of the public interests involved.

In reference to the retreat you state that the movement from Murfreesboro was resisted by you for some time after advised by your corps and division commanders; no mention of retreat was made to me until early on the morning of the 3d of January, when Lieutenant Richmond, of General Polk's staff, read me the general's note to you, and informed me of your verbal reply. I told him under the circumstances noth-

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xx, pt. i, p. 682.

ing could be done then. About ten o'clock the same day I met you personally at your quarters in compliance with your request. Lieutenant-General Polk being present, you informed me that the papers of General McCook had been captured, and from the strength of his corps, 18,000, it appeared that the enemy was stronger than you had supposed, that General Wheeler reported that he was receiving heavy reinforcements, and, after informing us of these facts, suggested the necessity of retreat, and asked my opinion as to its propriety.

Having heard your statements and views, I fully concurred, and it was decided to retreat. No proposition to retreat was made by me or my division commanders which was resisted by you for some time, and I recall your attention to the fact. Afterward in the evening, about seven o'clock, we met to arrange details, and, the retreat being still deemed advisable, and having been partially executed, I concurred in an immediate movement, in view of the heavy losses we had sustained and the condition of the troops.

You also request me to consult my subordinate commanders, stating that General Smith has been called to Richmond with the view, it was supposed, to supersede you, and that you will retire without regret if you have lost the good opinion of your generals, upon whom you have ever relied as upon a foundation of rock.

I have conferred with Major-General Breckinridge and Major-General Cleburne in regard to this matter, and I feel that frankness compels me to say that the general officers, whose judgment you have invoked, are unanimous in their opinion that a change in the command of this army is necessary. In this opinion I concur. I feel assured that this opinion is considerately formed, and with the highest respect for the purity of your motives, your energy, and your personal character; but they are convinced, as you must feel, that the peril of the country is superior to all personal considerations.

You state that the staff-officers of your generals, joining in the public and private clamor, have within your knowledge

persistently asserted that the retreat was made against the opinion and advice of their chiefs.

I have made inquiry of the gentlemen associated with me, and they inform me that such statements have not been made or circulated by them.

I have the honor, General, to assure you of my continued respect and consideration, and to remain,

Your obedient servant,

W. J. HARDEE,

Lieutenant-General.

GENERAL BRAGG,

General Commanding.

Generals Cleburne and Breckinridge wrote General Bragg in the same respectful spirit, and to the same effect, saying that this opinion was not alone theirs, but was fully shared by their brigade and other subordinate commanders, who also saw that he "did not possess the confidence of his army to that degree necessary to secure success."[1]

In some way the facts of this singular correspondence were reported at Richmond, and, as a result, the President instructed General Johnston, in a letter dated January 22, to proceed promptly to the headquarters of General Bragg's army, and there, after conversation with General Bragg and others of his command, decide what the best interests of the service required, and then to give him (the President) the advice which he needed at that juncture. The President said:

The answers, I am informed, have been but partially given, but are so far indicative of a want of confidence such as is essential to success. The enemy is said to be preparing to advance, and, though my confidence in General Bragg is unshaken, it cannot be doubted that, if he is distrusted by his

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xx, pt. i, pp. 683, 684.

officers and troops, a disaster may result, which, but for that cause, would have been avoided.

General Polk, returning from his leave of absence, reached the army simultaneously with General Johnston. General Bragg's letter had been forwarded to him, so that he was already familiar with its contents. A conference with his commanders revealed the fact that there was a difference of opinion as to the exact purport of the letter, some placing a different construction upon its meaning than that which had already been given it by General Hardee and his subordinates. In the face of this difference of opinion, Polk, although he agreed with General Hardee's construction, felt that he could not send his reply until the question was made clear to his subordinates. He therefore addressed General Bragg the following letter:

TULLAHOMA, TENN., January 30, 1863.

GENERAL BRAXTON BRAGG,

Commanding Army of Tennessee.

General: Your circular of the 11th instant was received by me at Asheville, N. C., on the 17th instant. I dispatched you immediately, saying I would leave for your headquarters in two days thereafter, and would furnish you the reply you desired on my arrival. There seemed to be two points of inquiry embraced in your note: first, whether the corps and division commanders to whom it is addressed were willing to give you a statement in writing of the opinions and counsel which they gave you verbally as to the retreat from Murfreesboro; second, whether you had lost the confidence of your general officers as a military commander. From the structure of your note, the first of the inquiries appears to be its leading object; the second, though not so clearly and separately stated, nevertheless is, to my mind, plainly indicated. Upon inquiry, I find this indication seems not to have

been so clear to the mind of General Cheatham and such other of my subordinate officers as responded, when they penned their replies; and since, in your note, you appeal to our official relations and to our candor for a frank expression of our opinion, I feel, to avoid being placed in a false position, that it is due to my subordinate officers and to myself, as well as to you, to ask whether the construction I put upon your note is that you design.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. POLK.

In reply the following answer was promptly received:

TULLAHOMA, TENN., January 30, 1863.

LIEUT.-GENERAL POLK, *etc.:*

General: I hasten to reply to your note of this morning, so as to place you beyond all doubt in regard to the construction of mine of the 11th instant. To my mind, that circular contained but one point of inquiry, and it certainly was intended to contain but one, and that was to ask of my corps and division commanders to commit to writing what had transpired between us in regard to the retreat from Murfreesboro. I believed it had been grossly and intentionally misrepresented (not by any one of them) for my injury. It was never intended by me that this should go farther than the parties to whom it was addressed, and its only object was to relieve my mind of all doubt, while I secured, in a form to be preserved, the means of defense in the future, when discussion might be proper. The paragraph relating to my supersedure was only an expression of the feeling with which I should receive your replies, should they prove I had been misled in my construction of your opinion and advice.

I am, General, very respectfully, etc.,

BRAXTON BRAGG,
General Commanding.

This letter effectually debarred General Polk and his subordinates from any expression touching the question

of confidence in General Bragg as commander of the army, so Polk's reply was restricted, as follows:

TULLAHOMA, January 31, 1863.

General: I am in receipt of yours of the 30th inst. in reply to mine of the same date; in it you say you designed the circular should contain but *one* point of inquiry, and that was whether your corps and division commanders would give you for future reference a statement of what transpired between us in regard to the retreat from Murfreesboro. I have therefore now to say that the opinion and counsel which I gave you on that subject prior to the retreat are those that are embodied in my endorsement of the note of my division commanders, Generals Cheatham and Withers, of the 3d of January, which are in your possession, and I have to add that they were deliberately considered, and are such as I would give again under the same circumstances.

Respectfully, General, yours,

L. POLK,

Lieutenant-General Commanding.

GENERAL BRAGG,

Commanding Army of Tennessee.

Two days after this letter was delivered, General Polk learned that his action in the matter was exposing him to the criticism of General Hardee and the general officers of that corps. He found they were disposed to think that he and his general officers had evaded the real issue, which, in spite of General Bragg's letter of the 30th, General Hardee and his officers insisted was the question of confidence in General Bragg as commander of the army. He also learned that there was a feeling among them that, in view of the investigation then being conducted by the government through General Johnston, this action on the part of General Polk left the officers of Hardee's corps in the unenviable position of mere "discontents."

General Bragg's letter made it impossible for Polk to place himself and his subordinates before General Johnston in the position occupied by Hardee and his officers. In justice, therefore, first to his brother officers and then to himself, but more than all in behalf of what he and all the other general officers believed to be the public good, he adopted the only course open to him. He wrote directly to Mr. Davis, accompanying the letter with all the correspondence that had passed between General Bragg, himself, and his generals, beginning with the first note written by Cheatham and Withers from the field, 12.15 A.M., January 3, and ending with his own to General Bragg of January 31.

HEADQUARTERS POLK'S CORPS, ARMY OF TENNESSEE,
February 4, 1863.

My dear Sir: I know that you have been apprised of a correspondence which has taken place between General Bragg and the corps and division commanders of Hardee's corps, of this army, following upon the retreat from Murfreesboro. As the same circular which was answered by the officers of Hardee's corps was received by those of mine, I think it proper to send you a copy of the correspondence which passed between General Bragg and myself. You will find it enclosed with this. . . .

This correspondence has been very unfortunate, and its inauguration ill-judged; but it is now a part of the history of the times, and I feel it to be my duty to transmit to you copies of the letters which have passed between the general and myself. That correspondence speaks for itself. I thought, with the officers of Hardee's corps, that he desired an opinion on two points. Some of my subordinate commanders had thought, and others then thought, that he desired us to reply to but one. As he desired us to consult our subordinates before answering, the difference of opinion as to the construction of his note made it plainly proper to ask him which was the proper construction. To have this was necessary to

an intelligible and satisfactory reply. It will be seen what the reply was, which made my final answer plain and easy. I think it would not be difficult, from the form of my note, for him to have inferred what my answer would have been if he had asked. It was waived and declined. Under the circumstances it would seem to have been natural for him to desire to know the opinions of all, as he had been forced to know those of half of his subordinates of the highest grade, but, as I have said, it was declined. I feel it a duty to say to you that, had I and my division commanders been asked to answer, our replies would have coincided with those of the officers of the other corps. You have known my opinions on this subject since my visit to Richmond.

I have only to add, if he were Napoleon or the great Frederick, he would serve our cause at some other point better than here. My opinion is he had better be transferred. I remember you having said, speaking of his being transferred from this command, "I can make good use of him here in Richmond." I have thought that the best disposition for him and for the service of the army that could be made. His capacity for organization and discipline, which has not been equaled among us, could be used by you at headquarters with infinite advantage to the whole army.

I think, too, that the best thing to be done in supplying his place would be to give his command to General Joseph E. Johnston. He will cure all discontent and inspire the army with new life and confidence. He is here on the spot, and I am sure will be content to take it. If General Lee can command the principal army in his department in person, there is no reason why General Johnston should not. I have, therefore, as a general officer of this army, speaking in behalf of my associates, to ask respectfully that this appointment be made, and I beg to be permitted to do this urgently. The state of this army demands immediate attention, and its position before the enemy, as well as the mind of its troops and commanders, could find relief in no way so readily as by the appointment of General Joseph E. Johnston.

This letter fulfilled all that General Polk could do under the circumstances, and it presented to the government the state of affairs in that army in a way that no other officer had been able to do. This arose from the fact that at the close of the Kentucky campaign, as has been said, he was sent to Richmond at the request of the President, that he might be conferred with personally upon the state of affairs in the department, and, while there, had been asked categorically as to the degree of confidence with which General Bragg had inspired his army. He had even then been compelled to say that General Bragg no longer held the confidence of his army, and, in answer to a query as to who should succeed him, had suggested General Joseph E. Johnston. These facts are alluded to in the sentence of the above letter, "You have known my opinions on this subject since my visit to Richmond."

General Johnston bestowed three weeks upon the investigation, "and then advised against General Bragg's removal, because the field-officers of the army represented that the men were in high spirits and as ready as ever for fight; such a condition seeming to me incompatible with the alleged want of confidence in their general's want of ability."[1]

This decision left the case about as it was before the inquiry began, and did not satisfy the government, because on March 9 General Johnston was ordered to assume command of the Army of Tennessee, and to order General Bragg to report to the War Department at Richmond for conference.

General Johnston accordingly, on March 18, without the publication of a formal order to that effect, as-

[1] "Johnston's Narrative," p. 62.

sumed the duties of commander of the army. But he evidently and naturally preferred not to be made the channel through which General Bragg's supersedure should proceed, and on April 10, under the plea of not being well, said that he was not then able to serve in the field, and consequently General Bragg was necessary there as the commander of the army.

Pending this action of April 10, and while General Johnston was exercising command, a staff-officer of the President's (Colonel W. Preston Johnston) being present making a general inspection of the army, General Polk wrote Mr. Davis the following letter, which no doubt accurately stated General Johnston's position in the investigation which the government had placed upon him.

[*Private.*]

HEADQUARTERS POLK'S CORPS,
SHELBYVILLE, March 30, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS, *Richmond, Va.:*

Colonel [W. P.] Johnston has been with me since Saturday. He has made known the object of his coming, and I have discussed the points submitted with him freely.

My views in regard to the condition of things here are mature and clear. He informs me he finds them to be such as are entertained in the other corps. They are those I expressed to you in a letter I addressed to you some time since, enclosing a copy of a correspondence. The grounds on which they rest I have submitted to Colonel Johnston.

My idea is—my conviction, rather—that if the presence and offices of General Bragg were entirely acceptable to this army, the highest interests—military interests—of the Confederacy would be consulted by transferring him to another field, where his peculiar talent—that of organization and discipline—could find a more ample scope. For that kind of service he has undoubtedly peculiar talent. His tastes and natural inclination fit him for it, and he has now the ad-

vantage of large and fresh experience. The application of that talent is not always easy or agreeable where it exists. Yet there are few armies which would not be benefited by it, even if the benefit came from without.

My opinion is that the general could be of service to all the armies of the Confederacy if placed in the proper position. Such a position would be that of a place in the Adjutant- and Inspector-General's Department at Richmond. Assign him the duties of Inspector-General. If the duties are attended to as the imperfectly organized and disciplined condition of our troops require, they will furnish full employment for any single mind. And, from my observation while in Richmond, it will be a great relief to General Cooper, whose energy and business capacity, great as they are, seemed well-nigh overtaxed.

The general could not object to the position on the score of rank, as the ranking officer of the army now holds that position. It is as competent to assign General Bragg as any other officer to that duty, and, as his specialty is that which the office of Inspector-General covers, his resources and capacity would be felt throughout the army, and the whole family of idlers, drones, and shirks of high and low degree, far and near, would feel his searching hand, and be made to take their places and do their duty.

Besides, I think, with a proper presentation of the importance of the duties to be performed, his acknowledged ability for their performance, etc., he would accept with pleasure—at least until he had reduced things all round to order.

This done, the way is clear for assigning General Johnston to the command of this army, a measure which would give universal satisfaction to the officers and men.

Colonel Johnston informed me that he thinks General Johnston desires to keep General Bragg in his present position. I think the case would be more properly stated by saying that he does not wish to be, or seem to be, the cause of his removal. I have conversed with him on the subject, and he feels a delicacy, as I understand it, in touching the case of a man to whose command he might succeed in the event of

his being removed from it. I do not think I misapprehend his feelings, though of course think them morbid, and, in the present relations of the parties, misplaced.

I know that General Johnston thinks himself but half employed, and that he would be much better satisfied commanding an army in the field than doing the duties of administering a department. If it should be thought that he could not take charge of operations in the field, and administer the three departments now under his care, then separate Pemberton's, and restrict him to East Tennessee and Department No. 2. These go well together, and both he and Pemberton might report to you at Richmond. Whether General Johnston is the best man for the place or not, is not the question; the army and the West believe so, and both would be satisfied with the appointment, and I believe it the best that could be made.

But General Johnston's letter of April 10 practically closed the subject, and secured to General Bragg a continuance of the command of the army.

General Johnston remained at Tullahoma until May 9, when the government ordered him to Mississippi to take command of the forces opposing General Grant.

It is readily seen that after such a correspondence and investigation the relations between General Bragg and his general officers were necessarily strained, but it did not interfere with the improvement of the army, which, in other respects, increased in efficiency every day. This condition of affairs, graphically pictured in the following extracts from General Polk's letters to his wife, is a speaking tribute to the good sense and patriotism of General Bragg and his subordinates, showing, as it does, that, in spite of serious differences, the common good was sedulously cared for.

SHELBYVILLE, March 30, 1863.

. . . I have to-day had a review of my whole corps for the benefit of President Davis, in the person of his aide-de-camp,

Colonel W. Preston Johnston. It was a fine affair, and all things went off satisfactorily. The troops looked very well, and I never saw them march so well. My corps was never in better condition, and is now about 20,000 strong. I confess I felt proud of the fellows as they marched by me to-day. In their hearts is embodied as large and as intense an amount of rebellion as was ever concentrated in the same number of men. It is a pleasure to command such men. Johnston was highly pleased and very complimentary.

SHELBYVILLE, April 11, 1863.

. . . I have just returned from Tullahoma, where I have been for the last three days. I went up to see Generals Johnston, Bragg, Hardee, and Breckinridge. I saw them all; Hardee turned out his whole corps and gave us a grand review. It was my birthday, too. The review was on that day, yesterday. I reviewed the troops. The general did his best. He had sent all around for the ladies of the neighboring villages; for you must know that he is the beau of the army, and nothing pleases him so much as to have a bevy of ladies around him. He had about 14,000 men on the field. The review was managed by Breckinridge, and he rode around the lines with me. The day was fine—a little dusty, and the turn-out was general. The troops looked fine, and marched well. They have improved very much since he has been at Tullahoma. After the review the general had a horse-race and then a tournament. The whole affair was quite gay, and everybody seemed much pleased. It was quite an affair. I am to reciprocate the civility next week; the horse-race I shall turn over to General Cheatham, and should be so much pleased if you and the girls could be near enough to witness and enjoy it. I shall be very willing to present my corps to him and his officers in return, as it has been drilling very steadily and is in fine plight. My corps now numbers near 20,000, and they are in high condition and full of life and spirit. General Bragg says he will make my corps a visit in a few days; so does General Johnston.

Just to think, I am fifty-seven! I have spent many of these

years as I would not again. But in many of them I have tried to do my duty. The Lord pardon the omissions of the past and give me grace to redeem the time in the future.

Altie[1] is quite well, and sends his respects to his mistress. . . .

April 16, 1863.

. . . General Bragg is now here visiting the corps with the view of inspecting it. He and two of his aides-de-camp dined with me to-day, with my three division commanders, Cheatham, Withers, and Stewart. . . . I had a review yesterday of all my corps. General Bragg and staff present and highly pleased. Our transportation is in fine condition; horses and mules all fat, and battery horses and batteries in fine condition. The troops have plenty of clothes and are now all well shod. We have plenty of food also, and as far as the fields before us are any indication, there never was such a wheat harvest.

In his "Three Months in the Southern States" Lieutenant-Colonel Fremantle of the English army speaks of General Polk, whom he met about this time, as follows:

Lieutenant-General Leonidas Polk, Bishop of Louisiana, who commands the other *corps d'armée*, is a good-looking, gentleman-like man, with all the manners and affability of a "grand seigneur." He is fifty-seven years of age, tall, upright, and looks much more the soldier than the clergyman.

He is much beloved by the soldiers on account of his great personal courage and agreeable manners. I had already heard no end of anecdotes of him, told me by my traveling companions, who always alluded to him with affection and admiration. In his clerical capacity I had always heard him spoken of with the greatest respect.

On arriving at General Polk's, he invited me to take up my quarters with him during my stay with Bragg's army, which offer I accepted with gratitude. After dinner he told me that

[1] His body-servant.

he hoped his brethren in England did not very much condemn his present line of conduct. He explained to me the reasons which had induced him, temporarily, to forsake the cassock and return to his old profession. He stated the extreme reluctance he had felt in taking this step, and he said that, so soon as the war was over, he should return to his episcopal avocations in the same way as a man, finding his house on fire, would use every means in his power to extinguish the flames, and would then resume his ordinary pursuits.

. . . We have prayers both morning and evening by Dr. Quintard, together with singing, in which General Polk joins with much zeal.

. . . 31st May, 5 P.M., Sunday. I was present at a great open-air preaching at General Wood's camp. Bishop Elliott preached most admirably to a congregation composed of nearly 3000 soldiers, who listened to him with the most profound attention. Generals Bragg, Polk, Hardee, Withers, Cleburne, and endless brigadiers, were also present.

. . . I took leave of General Polk before I turned in. His hospitality and kindness exceeded anything I could have expected. I shall always feel grateful to him on this account, and I shall never think of him without admiration for his character as a sincere patriot, a gallant soldier, and a perfect gentleman.

We now present an extract from a letter to Mrs. Polk, which, with Colonel Fremantle's comment given above, will present to the reader an accurate view of General Polk's attitude toward matters religious while serving as a soldier.

June 14, 1863.

This is Sunday, and I have just returned from church. The day is very fine and clear, and everything is calm and delightful. I went to the Presbyterian Church to hear the Rev. Dr. Palmer of New Orleans. He called to see me yesterday, and we had an agreeable conversation on the state of the country and the army and the times. I find him always intelligent, and therefore agreeable in conversation. He preached us a very satisfactory and instructive sermon to-

day. All were pleased, and, as I hope, all benefited. He is to spend some time with the army, as well to aid in placing chaplains with regiments not supplied as to preach himself. A great and highly commendable effort is now being made by the religious bodies of the country to supply the spiritual wants of the army, and I hope the best results will follow from their effort. It is one in which I take great interest, and which I foster in every way in my power. Indeed, I think on the judicious application of the means of imparting religious instructions to the army very much depends the future condition of our people when it shall please God to relieve us from the pressure of this scourging war and restore us to peace. If we should allow our troops to give vent to their natural feeling and passions in retaliating on the enemy, we should train them up to a condition of mind totally unfitting them to fall into a well-disciplined and chastened civilization when the war shall have closed. To us this is especially important, since literally now the country is the army; for all the men of all classes are in the army. It is therefore of the highest importance that its moral condition should be well watched, and its spiritual condition cared for and elevated. It is important, too, that, as the army is made up of all classes of religion, all classes should be represented in their teachers, and the best specimens of their teachers should be employed to act upon them.

No more fitting opportunity will be presented than is here found for allusion to some of the personalities who, as specimens of their class, were chaplains in this army. It is needless to say that in their representative capacity they presented wide differences of type. On the one hand was found the representative of the Covenanter, on the other hand the less æsthetic exponent of the Anglican faith, who by his good-fellowship, and, in one noted instance, familiarity with medical as well as sacred things, found welcome wherever he went. Upon the outskirts of this fellowship were to be found all sorts

and conditions of chaplains, who, living and working and at times fighting alongside their charge, reached rough natures in a way that no exercise of ordinary priestly function could possibly have done. There were two of this class who even now stand well out in relief. One was a robust, aggressive, rather uncompromising man, whose lines had fallen among some of the best soldiers of the army, but who from their frontier life had acquired many ungodly habits. In one of the periods of camp life they had become rather aggressive with their cock-fighting and "keno," all of which was duly advertised and commented upon one Sunday in no gentle terms by the chaplain. That night his horse's tail was cleanly shaved; and when he appeared upon it on the march, the following day, he was met by uncomplimentary shouts about "Here's your mule," etc. Singling out the group from which the cries chiefly came, he offered to thrash any one or all of them at the next halt. From that moment he became a leader of the command, hardly second to the brigade-commander himself; and while there were occasional relapses, the brigade ultimately acquired a reasonable reputation for righteous behavior.

The other chaplain was a singular figure, one upon which the memory loves to dwell. Of small stature, he always looked more starved than well fed. Restless, untiring, with a keen knowledge of men, he was ever ready to adapt himself, within proper limits, to his surroundings. Well educated, an accomplished linguist, he could not merely play a good game of cards, but could soften defeat in such as were honored in his victories. But the battlefield was his strong point, where the good father, well up behind the line of battle, with holy water and absolution repaid many a stout soul for the loss of its poor body.

THE TULLAHOMA CAMPAIGN.

With the exception of the brilliant cavalry operations of General Van Dorn and General Forrest in front of Columbia, Tenn., and the aggressions of General Wheeler and General Morgan along the front of the Federal army at Murfreesboro, the spring of 1863 passed without witnessing any military movements of consequence.

General Bragg's force now numbered 44,000 men of all arms,—about 36,000 infantry and artillery and 8000 cavalry.[1] This statement is meant to include the command of General Buckner, which joined the Army of Tennessee at Tullahoma in the midst of the campaign, which was initiated during the last week of June. It does not include the cavalry command of General John Morgan, which General Bragg, following his policy at Murfreesboro, had detached, but a short time before, upon the unfortunate and disastrous expedition into Ohio and Indiana.

The line occupied by the Confederate army conformed, in the main, to the course of Duck River. The left, under General Polk, rested at Shelbyville, and was extended by cavalry as far as Columbia; the right, under General Hardee, rested at Wartrace, extending thence by means of its cavalry as far as McMinnville. Earthworks of considerable extent had been constructed both at Shelbyville and Tullahoma, with a view to protection against any direct attack.

The Confederate right covered Tullahoma, and with it the main line of railroad, which ran thence by way of

1 The division of General Breckinridge had been detached to General Johnston in Mississippi, where it remained until just before the battle of Chickamauga, when it was returned to the Army of Tennessee.

Dechard across Elk River to Cowans at the foot of the Cumberland Mountains; the road then ran through a long tunnel, skirted the base of the range, and reached the gorge of the Tennessee River at Bridgeport. Here it crossed the river and ran thence along the banks to Chattanooga. This railroad was General Bragg's only line of supply, and its general direction to his right and rear exposed it to a quick movement in that direction.

General Rosecrans had utilized his period of rest to construct a thorough system of fortifications at Murfreesboro, which he designed for the protection of his accumulated supplies when he should move forward.

His army had been increased both in efficiency and numbers, so that on the 23d of June he was able to begin his campaign with 60,000 infantry and artillery and 10,000 cavalry.[1]

The plan formulated by General Rosecrans, and which he endeavored to carry out, was the turning of the Confederate right, the seizure of the railroad to their rear, and then an attempt to force them to fight him in a position of his own choosing, or else retreat by their left, thus leaving Chattanooga uncovered and open to his occupation.

In pursuance of this plan a heavy demonstration was made against General Polk at Shelbyville, under cover of which General Rosecrans, by the morning of the 27th, was able to reach Manchester, a point to the rear of General Bragg's right, and within twelve miles of Tullahoma.

Pending the arrival of all his forces at that point, General Rosecrans dispatched a force to destroy the

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxiii, pt. i, p. 410.

railroad behind General Bragg. This was accomplished in part on the 28th and 29th.

In the forward movement, the column upon the Federal right struck the advance of General Hardee's corps, which was guarding the passes at Liberty and Hoover's gaps. These two gaps, together with Guy's Gap, were defiles in the range of hills which separated the positions of the two armies at Tullahoma and at Murfreesboro. The turnpike roads leading south from Murfreesboro passed through these gaps, which made them strong positions at which to contest the direct advance the Federal army was thought to be making. In keeping with this view, General Bragg, who had not as yet penetrated General Rosecrans' designs, and was not aware of the position upon his right which the enemy had even then reached, now (June 25) moved up all of Hardee's corps to the support of his outposts at the gaps.

On the morning of the 26th he directed Polk to advance his corps, through Guy's Gap, to the front of Shelbyville, and at daylight of the 27th assail the force pressing Hardee at Liberty Gap, it being understood that Hardee would attack from his front at the same time. General Polk suggested that the movement was imprudent and would prove just what the enemy wanted. The suggestion was not approved, however, and General Polk proceeded to carry out the command. That afternoon, however, Rosecrans' movement upon Manchester was discovered, and in consequence Polk and Hardee were ordered to withdraw to Tullahoma.

General Polk marched from Shelbyville early on the 27th, but such was the condition of the roads, owing to the rains, that he did not reach Tullahoma, twenty miles away, until 4 P.M. the following day. The country to the

south of Duck River, in which the two armies were then manœuvering, being made up of a peculiarly spongy soil, which when softened by the heavy rains then falling became almost impassable for trains, and in places difficult even for horses, the condition of the roads throughout the campaign was therefore a constant obstacle to both armies.

On the morning of the 29th the Confederate army was placed in line behind the works constructed about Tullahoma. The following, quoted from notes made by Lieutenant Richmond, shows the difficulties of the situation and the result of a military conference at headquarters:

After getting his command in position, General Polk went to General Bragg, about 9 A.M., for orders. While there, General Bragg informed the general that the enemy had destroyed the railroad at Dechard, and interrupted his communications with the rear; that the enemy's mounted force was so great as to render it impossible for him (General Bragg) to prevent it, and that he had determined to give the enemy battle where he then was (at Tullahoma), and for that reason would recall Walthall's brigade at Allisona Bridge. General Polk then remarked that, if it was his determination to fight there, it was very proper to recall the brigade. The general then rode along the entire lines, and, overtaking General Hardee, informed him (General Hardee) of General Bragg's determination, and told him that he (General Polk) thought that determination, under the circumstances, an injudicious one.

They then both, about 3 P.M., went by appointment to army headquarters. There was present at the conference then held, General Bragg, General Mackall, General Polk, General Hardee, and Colonel David Urquhart, who was understood as acting as General Bragg's private secretary. General Bragg asked General Polk what was his counsel. General Polk, after reminding General Bragg that his communications with his base were destroyed, took the ground that his first duty was to reëstablish his communications.

General Bragg replied that they had been reëstablished since the interview of the morning. General Polk then asked: "How do you propose to maintain them?" He replied: "By posting cavalry along the line." General Polk remarked, in his opinion he had not cavalry enough at his disposal to cover other points and cover that line also, and therefore the enemy would possess himself of the line, by driving off the cavalry, in less than thirty-six hours; that if he (the enemy) did so, he would, no doubt, do it in force sufficient to hold the communications, in which event he (General Bragg) would be as effectually besieged as Pemberton in Vicksburg—his sources of supplies cut off. The enemy would not strike him a blow, but reduce him by starvation, either to surrender on the spot or to retreat along the line which he had indicated, by way of Fayetteville, Huntsville, and across the Tennessee in the vicinity of Decatur. In this last event, animals and men, being exhausted for want of food, would be unfitted for resistance, and his whole wagon train, including ordnance and his artillery, would fall a prey to the enemy. It was doubtful, also, in such a case, if he could get the army itself across the river. But supposing he succeeded in this last, he would find himself in the hills of north Alabama without food, and his army would be forced to disperse to avoid starvation. In the mean time the enemy would pass over the mountain, take possession of Chattanooga, and march without interruption into Georgia and the Carolinas, taking possession of the heart of the Confederacy. To avoid all these results, his opinion was that he should fall back in the direction of his base, so as to keep the line connecting him with it all the time covered. General Bragg said: "That is all very well, but what do you distinctly propose to have done?" General Polk replied he should fall back or retreat immediately, as he did not think there was a moment to spare. "Then," said General Bragg, "you propose that we shall retreat?" General Polk said: "I do, and that is my counsel." General Hardee was then asked what he thought. He replied that General Polk's views carried great weight with them, but he was not prepared to advise a retreat. He thought it would

be well to have some infantry sent along the line to support the cavalry, and to wait for further developments. It was agreed that this should be done, and that the infantry should be ordered back upon the line. This closed the conference.

The Confederate army held its position until the night of the 30th, when, finding that Rosecrans, who meanwhile had assembled all his army at Manchester, was pressing to gain his rear, General Bragg withdrew, and took up a position on the south side of Elk River, prepared to dispute there the further progress of the enemy.

About eight o'clock General Polk, who held a position near the railroad bridge, received the following note from General Bragg at Dechard:

7 P.M., July 1.

The enemy has reached your front; close up. The question to be decided instantly: shall we fight on the Elk or take post at foot of mountain at Cowan's?

To which General Polk replied:

You ask, "Shall we fight on the Elk or take post at foot of mountain at Cowan's?" I reply, take post at foot of mountain at Cowan's.

General Hardee, who was very uneasy at the outlook, sent the following notes to General Polk. From the second note it is presumed the query propounded to General Polk as to the selection of the battle-ground had been also asked of him.

HEADQUARTERS, July 1, 1863.
8.30 P.M.

My dear General: I have been thinking seriously of the condition of affairs with this army. I deeply regret to see General Bragg in his present enfeebled state of health. If we have a fight, he is evidently unable either to examine and

determine his line of battle or to take command on the field. What shall we do? What is best to be done to save this army and its honor? I think we ought to counsel together. Where is Buckner?

The enemy evidently believe we are retreating, and will press us vigorously to-morrow. When can we meet? I would like Buckner to be present.

Very respectfully and truly yours,

W. J. HARDEE,
Lieutenant-General.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL POLK.

July 1, 1863.

My dear General: I have answered unhesitatingly, "Let us fight at the mountain." This decision will render unnecessary the meeting which I sought to-night; we can talk about the matter to-morrow. I do not desire that any one but Buckner and yourself should know my anxiety. My mind is in part relieved by the decision, which I have no doubt will be made, to fight at the mountain. If asked under the circumstances named in my letter whether we ought to fight or retreat, my mind inclines now to the latter course.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL POLK.

The enemy failed to attack, and gave General Bragg an opportunity to move to the mountain. On July 2 Polk's corps was ordered to proceed to Cowan, Buckner in advance of it, Hardee to move on the road to Brakefield Point, Wheeler's cavalry to cover the rear.

At Cowan the troops drew up in line of battle, both flanks protected by the mountain.

On July 2, the enemy declining the tender of battle, although engaging Wheeler's cavalry warmly, General Bragg moved his force to Chattanooga, reaching there July 6, in good order and without serious loss.

Lieutenant Richmond, in his notes, makes this closing statement:

During the retreat not a gun was lost by the corps, not a pound of ordnance or quartermaster's stores, and not $2000 worth of commissary stores, and these last were distributed to the families of soldiers at Shelbyville.

Though there was some straggling, there were not a thousand men absent from the corps that started with it from Shelbyville; and, owing to recruits that met it on its arrival in Chattanooga and while *en route*, it was absolutely 400 stronger on its arrival than when it began its retrograde movement.

This statement of the condition of General Polk's corps applies with equal force to that of General Hardee. General Hardee was a soldier who thoroughly knew the business of war, not only upon the march, but in the camp and upon the battlefield,[1] and it was a great misfortune to the Army of Tennessee that it lost his services at this juncture. The government detached him to the command of General Johnston, where his eminent abilities as a teacher, disciplinarian, and organizer of troops were needed in the reconstruction of General Pemberton's army. As we know from these pages, he had served in the West from the outbreak of hostilities. Since the formation of this army he had occupied a most conspicuous position in every emergency which it had confronted; he had always proven himself equal to the duties devolved upon him; had held the confidence of his commanders, his associates, and his subordinates; and his troops, obeying him with a readiness which could only come from the utmost reliance, had shown their devotion to him upon every battlefield. A perfectly courageous man, he was cool and calculating in victory or defeat; quick to see an advantage, he could hurt his enemy and yet save his own men. When to these high

1 "Life of Albert Sidney Johnston," pp. 353, 354.

soldierly traits are added his tact and his intimate knowledge of the government of that army, its weaknesses and its strength,—how to supplement the one and counteract the other,—one realizes how his absence just at this time was much more to that army than a surface view would indicate. To General Polk it was a double loss: first, of a reliable friend; second, of an associate corps-commander with whom he had, as it were, grown up. Apart from their early association in Missouri, where they first learned to know each other, the perplexities peculiar to this army, which, as officers nearest to the commanding general, they had faced since Shiloh, had developed in General Hardee a knowledge of the requirements of the situation which could only be had by long contact with them; he therefore was prepared to meet the emergencies of the position of corps-commander in this army with a completeness and efficiency impossible to one a stranger to it.

General Bragg was not as conscious of all this as he became later, for Hardee's absence during the campaign and battle of Chickamauga proved a greater loss than even his presence at Missionary Ridge proved a gain.

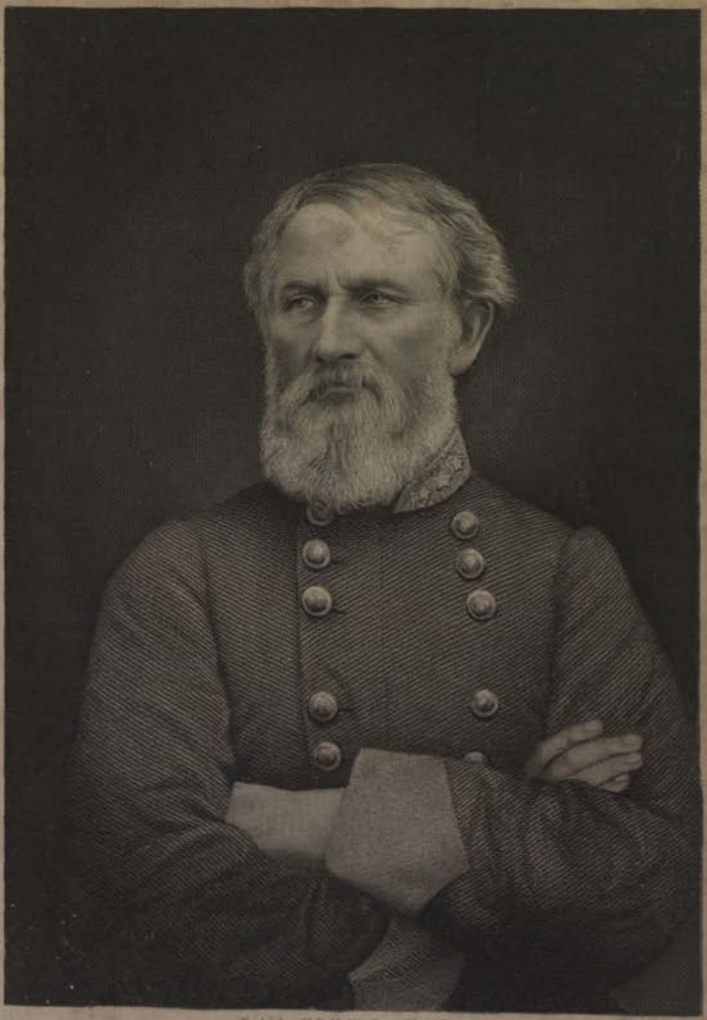
No doubt General Bragg would have preferred the transfer of General Polk, whom he characterized as not only lacking in promptness, but given to the exercise of too much latitude in the execution of important orders, thus marring his plans at times. But even if these objections had been other than the mere reflections of the uncertainties of action and inadequateness of information so often evinced by the head of the army, there remained a strength in the harmony of action and feeling existing between his corps-commanders and in their combined influence with him,—for it was very real, being always exercised with scrupulous subordination and

courtesy, — which was sorely missed by General Bragg in the campaign then forming.

As the government appeared to view the feeling of General Bragg's subordinates toward his conduct of the campaigns and battles of his army as evidences of an insubordinate spirit, or, perhaps, as was blindly charged, of selfish concern for themselves, it logically preferred to find elsewhere a successor to General Hardee. It therefore assigned General D. H. Hill, of the Army of Northern Virginia, to the position.

An ardent patriot and a gallant soldier, General Hill had won distinction as a division commander in many battles in Virginia. He now entered upon his duties on his new field in a manner which promised a fulfillment of every expectation from the government and from his friends.[1]

1 General Hill had served with General Bragg during the Mexican War, holding the position of lieutenant in Bragg's battery. General Thomas also was an officer in the same battery.



Engd by H.B. Hall's Sons, New York.

L. Polk
Lt. Genl.

ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY. BOMBAY BRANCH OF THE

CHAPTER VII.

CHICKAMAUGA.

JULY TO OCTOBER, 1863.

General Rosecrans crosses the Tennessee River.— General Burnside's advance.— Evacuation of Knoxville.— Rosecrans' activity.— Topographical view of the field.— Movements of the armies.— Thomas and Crittenden's escape.— Vacillation and delay.— Confederate position on the Chickamauga.— Beginning of the battle.— Relative strength of the armies; General Polk's headquarters.— Relations of Bragg and Hill.— General Polk's instructions.— General Hill's absence and delay.— Accusations against General Polk.— The lines of battle.— The second day's fighting.— Longstreet's advance.— General Hood disabled.— Lucius Polk and Jackson's charge.— The "rebel yell."— Bragg's inappreciation of the victory.— Dissatisfaction of the army.— Suspension of General Polk.— His defense, and action of President Davis thereon.— Transferred to a new command.

In the preceding chapter we have seen that the retreat from Tennessee was effected with slight or inconsiderable loss in men and transportation, and that Chattanooga was occupied during the first week of July. General Polk's corps, except Anderson's brigade of Withers's (now Hindman's) division,[1] which was placed at Bridgeport, where the Nashville railroad crosses the Tennessee River, for purposes of observation, was retained in and around Chattanooga, and Hill's corps was distributed along the line of the Knoxville railroad, with Tyner's Station as its center, General Bragg establishing the

1 General Hindman replaced General Withers in the command of this division, General Withers having been ordered to duty at Montgomery, Alabama.

army headquarters at Chattanooga. The work of fortifying was begun and prosecuted for some weeks, during which the army seemed to await the development of the enemy's plans. Beyond reconnoissances in some force to Bridgeport and at the mouth of Battle Creek, the enemy made no demonstration until the 21st of August, when he succeeded in covering the town of Chattanooga with his artillery from the heights overlooking the Tennessee River and the town. This bombardment of Chattanooga, which was intended as a demoralizing stroke, had the more pregnant significance of an announcement that the enemy's plans were completed, and were about being put in active operation. Its effect was the official evacuation of the place to points beyond range outside, and the withdrawal of stores to points of convenience on the railroad to the rear, and the retiring of Anderson's brigade from Bridgeport.

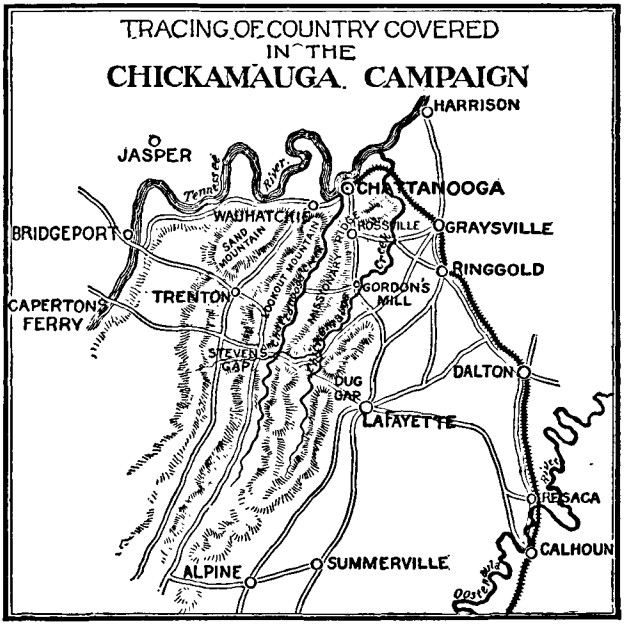
On the 26th of August General Burnside's advance into East Tennessee was announced by the presence of his cavalry in the vicinity of Knoxville, and General Buckner received orders to evacuate the town and occupy Loudon. In consequence of a demonstration, it was said, by a portion of Rosecrans' army at Blythe's Ferry on the Tennessee River, opposite to the mouth of the Hiawassee, he was ordered to fall back from Loudon to Charleston, and, soon after, to the vicinity of Chattanooga. Pending these movements above, which were to give East Tennessee to the Federals not only for occupation, but for coöperation with Rosecrans in his designs upon Chattanooga and the Army of Tennessee, Rosecrans was not idle below. On Tuesday morning, September 1, citizens living near Caperton's Ferry reported that the enemy was crossing the Tennessee River in force at that point; that on Saturday, the 29th of August, three days

before, a force of Federal cavalry had forded the river at some shallows above, had proceeded down the river on the south side to Caperton's, and, in conjunction with another force appearing simultaneously on the opposite shore, had thrown a pontoon bridge across the river; that the enemy commenced immediately to cross in force, had been crossing for three days (Saturday, Sunday, and Monday), and were moving across Sand Mountain in the direction of Wills' Valley and Trenton. This story, regarded at army headquarters as incredible, was soon after confirmed by reports of the occupation of Trenton by the enemy's cavalry, and by its advance up the Wills' Valley railroad in the direction of Chattanooga as far as Wahatchie (within seven miles), as a covering-force to the advance of its infantry columns on Trenton.

In order to understand this movement of General Rosecrans, and the subsequent operations, a topographical view is necessary.

Chattanooga is situated on the Tennessee River at the mouth of Chattanooga Valley, — a valley following the course of the Chattanooga Creek, and formed by Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge. East of Missionary Ridge, and running parallel with it, is another valley — Chickamauga Valley — following the course of Chickamauga Creek, which, with the Chattanooga Creek, discharges its waters into the Tennessee River; the first above and the latter below the town of Chattanooga, the two having a common source in McLemore's Cove, the common head of both valleys, which is bounded by Lookout Mountain on the west, and Pigeon Mountain on the east. Wills' Valley is a narrow valley lying to the west of Chattanooga, between Lookout Mountain and Sand Mountain, and is traversed by a railroad, which takes its name from the valley, and which, reaching from the

Nashville and Chattanooga railroad where the latter crosses the valley, had its terminus at that time at Trenton. The distance of Bridgeport from Chattanooga is twenty-eight miles, of Caperton's Ferry about forty, and



of Trenton something over twenty. Ringgold is eighteen miles from Chattanooga, on the railroad leading to Atlanta, and Dalton about forty, at the point where that railroad connects with the East Tennessee railroad. Rome is sixty-five miles southwest of Chattanooga, on the Coosa River, at the point of confluence of the Etowah and Oostenaula. The wagon road from Chattanooga to Rome—known as the Lafayette road—crosses Missionary Ridge into Chickamauga Valley at Rossville, and,

proceeding in a southwesterly direction, crosses Chickamauga Creek eleven miles from Chattanooga, at Lee and Gordon's Mill, and, passing to the east of Pigeon Mountain, goes through Lafayette, distant some twenty-two miles from Chattanooga, and Summerville, within twenty-five miles of Rome. From Caperton's Ferry there is a road leading over Sand Mountain into Wills' Valley at Trenton, and from Trenton to Lafayette and Dalton, over Lookout Mountain, through Cooper's and Stevens's gaps into McLemore's Cove, and thence over Pigeon Mountain through Dug Gap to Lafayette. The road from Trenton, following Wills' Valley, exposed, by easy communications, Rome, and through it western Georgia and eastern Alabama, with easy access to the important central positions, Atlanta and Selma.

General Bragg, believing a flanking movement to be the purpose of the enemy in his movements on the left, ordered General Hill, on Monday, September 7, to move with his corps to Lafayette, and General Polk to Lee and Gordon's Mill, and General Buckner, with the Army of East Tennessee, and General Walker, with his division but recently arrived from the Army of Mississippi, to concentrate at Lafayette, and General Pegram was directed to cover the Chattanooga and Atlanta railroad with his division of cavalry. These dispositions having been made of the Confederate forces, General Crittenden, commanding the left wing of General Rosecrans' army, which had not moved with the right and center, but had been left in the Sequatchie Valley, crossed the Tennessee River at the mouth of Battle Creek, and moved upon Chattanooga. General McCook, commanding the right wing, was thrown forward upon the road leading through Wills' Valley, to threaten Rome, and the corps of General Thomas was put in motion over Lookout Moun-

tain in the direction of Lafayette, by way of Stevens's Gap and McLemore's Cove. The reserve corps, under General Granger, was concentrating about Bridgeport. In view of the situation of the enemy as above given, General Polk, in response to an inquiry from the commanding general, urged the prompt seizure of the opportunity offered of striking Rosecrans in detail, and argued in favor of an attack, first upon Thomas, to be followed by one upon Crittenden, leaving McCook to be dealt with as he should attempt to recross the Tennessee River. General Bragg decided to make the initial effort against the corps of Thomas, whose advance, variously estimated at from 4000 to 8000 men, was known to have reached McLemore's Cove. Hindman's division was accordingly detached from General Polk's corps, in order that General Hindman himself might make the movement under the direct supervision of army headquarters. General Polk meanwhile, with his remaining division and General Buckner's corps, was assigned a position some four miles south of Lee and Gordon's Mill, to protect Hindman from interference by Crittenden, who, passing through Chattanooga, was then marching toward Ringgold. Hindman was ordered to move at midnight of September 9, and be in position as early as practicable. General Hill, whose corps lay in the direction of Lafayette, was ordered to take Cleburne's division, then guarding the approaches through Dug and Catlets gaps, and, moving through the gaps, to unite with Hindman and take charge of the forces. General Hill, however, reported Cleburne ill, and the roads through the gaps so filled with timber that he could not execute the order. General Buckner, in consequence, was directed, at 8 A.M. of the 10th, to move his corps to Hindman's support and supply General Hill's place. Hindman got into position early on the morn-

ing of the 10th. Buckner followed without delay, but was unable to reach Hindman until about half-past four o'clock in the afternoon — too late to accomplish the object in view on that day.

While these movements were going on, Negley's division of the opposing forces moved down into McLemore's Cove and advanced to within a mile of Dug Gap. Baird's division moved up within supporting distance, leaving Reynolds's and Brannan's divisions still to the west of the mountain.

By daylight of the following day — the 11th — General Hill had made his way through the gap, and was ready to respond to Hindman's attack, but, during the night, Hindman, through the wording of dispatches from army headquarters[1] (which had become needlessly apprehensive touching McCook's movements), was made uncertain of General Bragg's intentions and wishes, and did not attack. Negley, realizing the peril of his situation, withdrew with Baird, about 10 A.M., to a secure position at the foot and sides of the mountain. When this movement against Thomas was thus foiled (noon, September 11), the one clearly indicated as the next to be made was that against Crittenden, then near Ringgold. General Bragg already stood between Crittenden and Thomas, and an easy and safe march down Chattanooga Valley would have placed him in a position from which he could readily command Crittenden's line of retreat. Then, with his preponderance of cavalry, it would have been an easy matter to intercept this corps before it could escape across the Tennessee River. But, misled as to McCook's position, General Bragg marched all his force to Lafayette to meet as he supposed the advance of the enemy from Alpine northward. By this movement General

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, pp. 294, 295.

Bragg lost the advantage which he held over Crittenden, and at the same time sacrificed twenty-four hours. This delay was Crittenden's salvation. He utilized it to move all his corps to Lee and Gordon's Mill west of the Chickamauga, two thirds of it having been to the east of it near Ringgold, and by so doing established his communication with Thomas, and covered his line of retreat by Chattanooga. *This he accomplished by nightfall on the 12th.*[1]

On the night of the 11th, General Bragg, discovering that he was mistaken as to the position and attitude of McCook, turned his attention to Crittenden. Polk was directed to countermarch Cheatham's division and take position at Rock Spring Church, eight miles from Lafayette, and five miles from Lee and Gordon's Mill. During the afternoon of the 12th, Walker's division was added to this force; and toward the morning of the 13th, Hindman's also, which was then[2] for the first time returned to General Polk from the duty which it had been performing against Thomas in McLemore's Cove.

Unaware of the concentration which, during these movements, Crittenden had effected at Lee and Gordon's Mill, and believing him to be divided between this latter point and Peavine Church (see map), General Bragg, at 6 P.M. of the 12th, wrote Polk that from his position, which was five miles south of the mill and two miles southwest of Peavine Church, he had presented to him a fine opportunity for striking Crittenden in detail, and at 8 P.M. followed this note with an explicit order to attack at daylight the column at Peavine Church, on the Graysville and Lafayette road. These communications, coincident with the concentration of all Crittenden's corps

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. i, p. 604.

2 *Ibid.*, vol. xxx, pt. iv, pp. 641, 642.

at Lee and Gordon's Mill, had as their foundation the reports sent General Bragg by his cavalry, who, operating on the 12th against Crittenden's two divisions marching from Ringgold, had been met by the forces sent out to cover this movement. Wilder, on the Lafayette and Ringgold road, made a fierce attack on Pegram, and Palmer threw out a force as far as Peavine Church. These aggressions had been interpreted and reported as the real advance of Crittenden's detached divisions, and were again reported as such to General Polk upon his arrival (7 P.M.) at his position. He also learned then that the force at Lee and Gordon's Mill was likewise moving forward, a brigade having been advanced thence that afternoon for the purpose of a reconnoissance. As the first information was in keeping with that which he had just received from army headquarters, General Polk, without further investigation, assumed all to be correct.

Wishing to ensure, not merely the defeat of Crittenden's corps, but its destruction, he transmitted all this information to General Bragg at once (8 P.M.), and, after stating the disposition of Cheatham's and Walker's divisions, added, "I am therefore clearly of the opinion that you should send me additional force, so as to make failure impossible; and great success here would be of incalculable benefit to our cause." He then suggested that Buckner's corps be sent him, leaving Hill for any contingency at Lafayette. After saying that all his general officers agreed in this opinion, he continued: "I am myself so profoundly convinced of this, that I beg leave most respectfully and urgently to press this upon your attention." Then, in allusion to his position and plan, pending the arrival of Hindman, who was essential to his attack, he said: "The enemy is moving with steady step upon my position — it is a strong one — and will

no doubt attack early in the morning. My troops I cannot get into position in time to attack myself at so early an hour as day-dawn. If I find he is not going to attack me, I will attack him without delay."

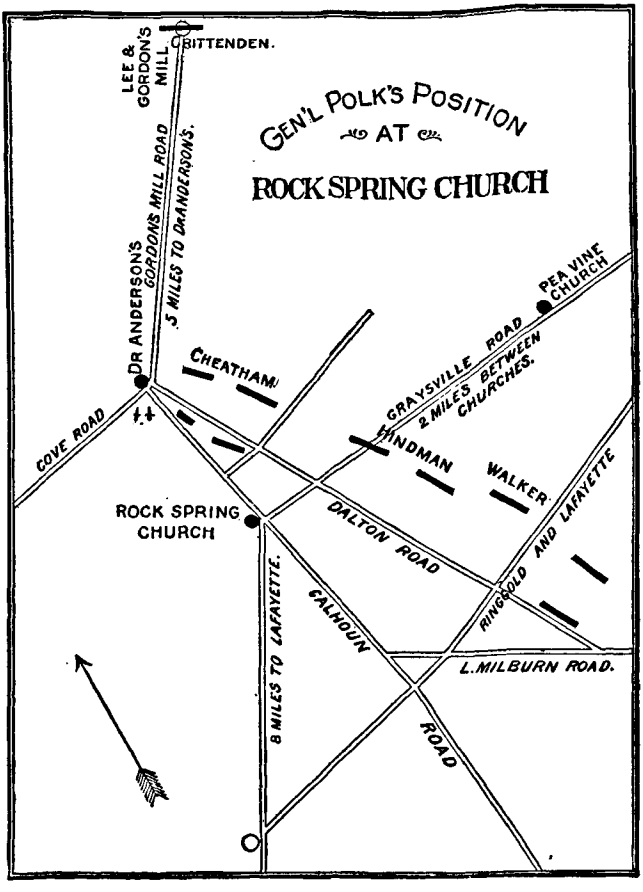
In reply General Bragg ordered Buckner forward, and at 12.30 A.M. added: "The enemy [McCook] is approaching from the south, and it is highly important that your attack in the morning should be quick and decided. Let no time be lost."

At daylight the cavalry moved forward to develop the enemy. Hindman got into position about six o'clock, and the line was soon ready to advance; but the question was, Upon which road? General Bragg had directed it upon the Graysville road, and the enemy had been reported in heavy force in that direction the night before; but the cavalry now reported that there was no enemy in that direction. They had retired, as we have seen, the evening before, as soon as the purpose of their advance had been accomplished, which, as we have shown, was the junction of all Crittenden's divisions at Lee and Gordon's Mill.

This fact was discovered about noon. It was now evident that the Confederate leaders had been outwitted, as no such force had been in Polk's front the night before, as had been reported to him, and as he reported to General Bragg.

In judging Polk's attitude in this matter, due weight must be given to his real purpose, which was to turn General Bragg's attention from McCook, and so fix it upon Crittenden that he would move upon him with force enough to accomplish, not merely his defeat, but his destruction. This purpose was in part fulfilled, because Buckner's corps was moved up, and General Bragg himself came to the front as early as 9 A.M. About

noon the enemy was definitely located at the mill, and Polk with 25,000 men was ready to move upon him.



But General Bragg declined to go farther, halted the troops, and, taking Buckner's corps with him, returned to Lafayette.

At first it is difficult to understand General Bragg's reason for not moving direct upon Crittenden at this time, as he was only five miles away, and the creek was easily fordable at many points both below and above his position. McCook, however, was again the disturbing element. This General Bragg stated at the time, and it is shown in his reply to General Polk's dispatch urging concentration upon Crittenden. There was a striking resemblance in all this to the attitude at Harrodsburg in the Kentucky campaign,— the same lack of information, the same vacillation,— and it was a suggestive revelation to those who had made the Kentucky campaign.

The 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th passed, and still nothing was attempted. General Polk's corps was withdrawn, and, with the remainder of the army, lay at Lafayette, watching Thomas and expecting McCook. Forty miles of road running across a difficult mountain range separated the Federal right from its companion corps. General Bragg stood with his army united in the midst of his enemy's disjointed forces, but he was bewildered and confused. The miscarriage of his plans seemed to paralyze him, and General Polk reluctantly admitted to himself that the condition of the commanding general was fast approaching that which during the retreat from Tullahoma had caused General Hardee so much uneasiness. He was physically unable to withstand the strain, and this became only the more apparent as the campaign progressed.

General Rosecrans finally abandoned the idea with which he had seemed possessed, that General Bragg was in disorderly retreat, and awakened at last to a sense of the peril of his position. He therefore retired Crittenden to the foot of Missionary Ridge, and directed

McCook to close on Thomas at Stevens's Gap as rapidly as possible. On the 17th of September these three corps were within supporting distance of each other, their line extending from opposite Lee and Gordon's Mill on their left, through McLemore's Cove, to the top of Lookout Mountain on their right.

Moving up carefully, General Bragg succeeded by the night of the 17th of September in placing his army in position upon the east side of the Chickamauga: its line extending from McLemore's Cove on the left to Reed's Bridge on the right; its center, commanded by General Polk, resting opposite Lee and Gordon's Mill.

In view of the tempting opportunity now offered to the Confederate general, with the army of Rosecrans spread out before him, General Polk proposed that a strong demonstration be made at Lee and Gordon's Mill, and, under cover of this feint, that the remainder of the army should march rapidly by the right flank as far as Reed's Bridge and fords near by, and, having crossed Chickamauga Creek and Valley, should occupy Rossville; and then, moving at right angles to the Lafayette and Chattanooga road, close the exit of the opposing forces from the valley in the direction of Chattanooga.

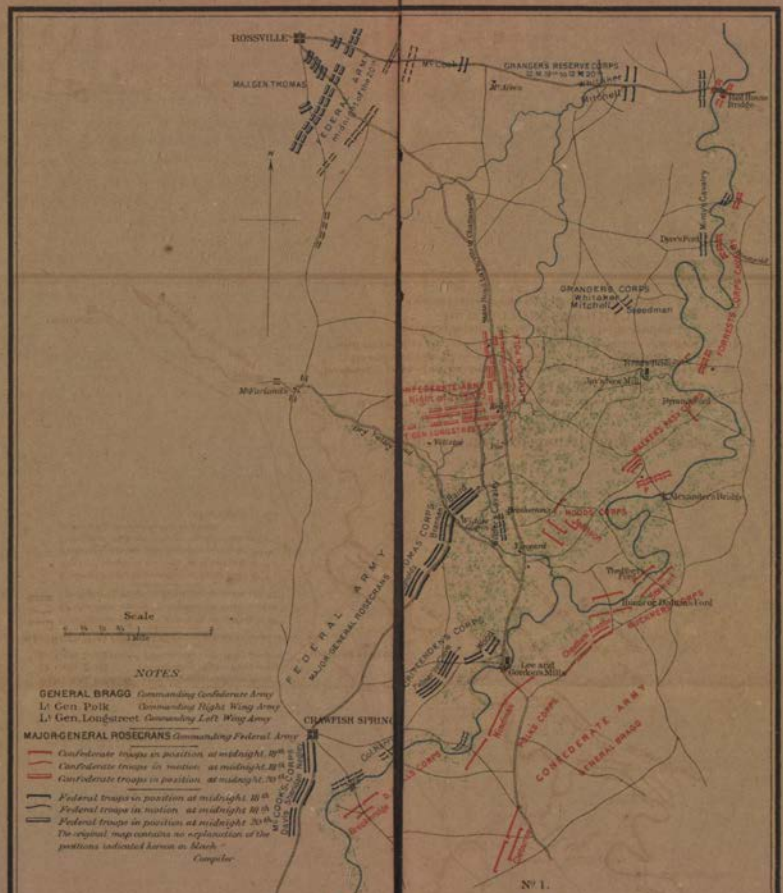
The movement could have been supported by General Longstreet's troops, then arriving at Ringgold from Virginia, and in spite of the presence of Granger, then at Chattanooga, would have effectually barred General Rosecrans' communication with Chattanooga, and placed him in the power of the Confederate general. This movement could have been executed on the 17th or 18th of September. But General Bragg, who practically had already formulated a similar plan, believed he could accomplish the same end by crossing nearer the mill, the point at which the Federal left then rested, and in ac-

cordance with this design he issued the necessary orders. By nightfall of the 18th he had placed Hood's and Walker's commands, with Forrest's cavalry, to the west of the river, covering the bridges and fords by which he intended to cross the remainder of the army on the following day. Forrest was at Alexander's Bridge, Walker half a mile in front of him, Hood in front of Thedford's Ford, about nine hundred yards east of the Chattanooga road. General Polk and General Hill were opposite Lee and Gordon's and Glass's Mills respectively, and during the day made demonstrations against the forces at these points, in order to cover the movements just noted.

Pending these movements, General Rosecrans, perceiving General Bragg's purpose, shifted his line farther down the stream, retaining Crittenden at Lee and Gordon's Mill. He moved McCook near Pond Spring, and Thomas was directed to pass to the rear of Crittenden and take position near Kelly's house, on the Lafayette and Chattanooga road, nearly opposite Reed's Bridge. (See Map 1 of the series.) Thomas succeeded by dawn of the 19th in placing Brannan's and Baird's divisions in the position to which he had been ordered.

Leaving for a moment the movement of troops, we will now give some notice to the field upon which the battle of Chickamauga was to be fought.

It was an undulating surface, gradually rising as it extended from the stream to the spurs and ravines of the foothills of Missionary Ridge, from two to four miles to the west. The road from Chattanooga to Lafayette, called the State road, ran through this space in a nearly straight line from Rossville on the north, where it crossed Missionary Ridge, to Lee and Gordon's Mill on the south, where it crossed the Chickamauga. The line of this part


ROSSVILLE
MAJ GEN THOMAS
FEDERAL ARMY
MAJ GEN ROSECRANS
McFarlands
GRANGERS RESERVE CORPS
GRANGERS CORPS
Major General Gordon Granger
Major General Joseph Hooker
Major General Alexander McCook
Major General George H. Thomas
Major General Thomas L. Crittenden
Major General John M. Palmer
Major General Philip H. Sheridan
Major General Jefferson C. Davis
Major General Absalom Baird
Major General Richard W. Johnson
Major General James S. Negley
Major General Joseph J. Reynolds
Major General Thomas J. Wood
Major General John Brannan
Major General Horatio P. Van Cleve
Major General Lovell H. Rousseau
Major General Gordon Granger
Major General Robert S. Granger
Major General Joseph Hooker
Major General Alexander McCook
Major General Daniel H

of the road, together with the general line of the stream, which lay east of the road, formed an acute angle, with its apex at Lee and Gordon's Mill and its base toward Rossville. It was within this angle that the Confederate line formed, conforming itself in the main to the line of the road, and for that reason at a distance from the stream, which increased gradually from left to right. On the 19th the Federal line conformed in the main to the line of the road, but on the 20th was forced to alter this relation, as will appear. The entire area, more especially that part between the road and the stream, was covered mostly with undergrowth still in leaf. In the main it was heavily wooded, but here and there, particularly along the line of the State road, were cultivated fields. There had been but little rain for some time prior to the battle, consequently the old coating of dead leaves and the dry grass afforded a ready fuel for the spread of fire. Partly from the accidents of battle, but mainly from the camp-fires, this was soon developed, and upon the right, where the woods were most dense, so much smoke was created as to embarrass movement after dark.

THE BATTLE OF THE 19TH.

At dawn on the 19th of September the Confederate demonstration at Lee and Gordon's Mill was resumed, with a view of holding the enemy in their position at that point. In order to complete the left of the Confederate line of battle, General Buckner now took position to the left of General Hood, his left resting on the stream some fifteen hundred yards below the mill. Cheatham, who had been detached from General Polk during the previous night, crossed Hunt's Ford about 7 A.M., and took post in the rear of Walker's position of the day pre-

vious, from which Walker had moved to take post on Hood's right. Forrest, under orders direct from army headquarters, moved at dawn with Pegram's division to reconnoiter in the direction of the roads leading west from Reed's Bridge, and in doing so struck a brigade that had gone out in like observation under the direction of General Thomas.

Forrest attacked, and the battle of Chickamauga began: unexpectedly to General Bragg, however, because it was in a direction for which he was unprepared, for he still placed the enemy's left at Lee and Gordon's Mill, where he had planned to assail and turn it.

General Rosecrans, as we have seen, had judiciously thrust his left beyond the Confederate right to an advantageous position, which enabled him not only to cover his line to Chattanooga, but to assault the Confederate right with the expectation of crushing it in the bed of the Chickamauga. General Thomas was honored with the command of this assault, and he strove with his best will to achieve it. Asking Palmer, of Crittenden's corps, to strike in front while he attacked in flank, he added, "I think we can use them up." With Brannan's and Baird's divisions he bore down heavily against Forrest until the latter appealed to Walker for relief. Ector's and Wilson's brigades speedily responded, and with this force the gallant cavalry chief stayed the tide of battle. The check, however, was but temporary. General Bragg next dispatched the remainder of Walker's command to his support. Its timely onset about 11.30 A.M. placed the advantage with the Confederates.

The divisions of Johnston, Palmer, and Reynolds now came into General Thomas's line on the right, and, striking Walker's left flank while he was forcing back Brannan and Baird, seriously threatened the capture of a

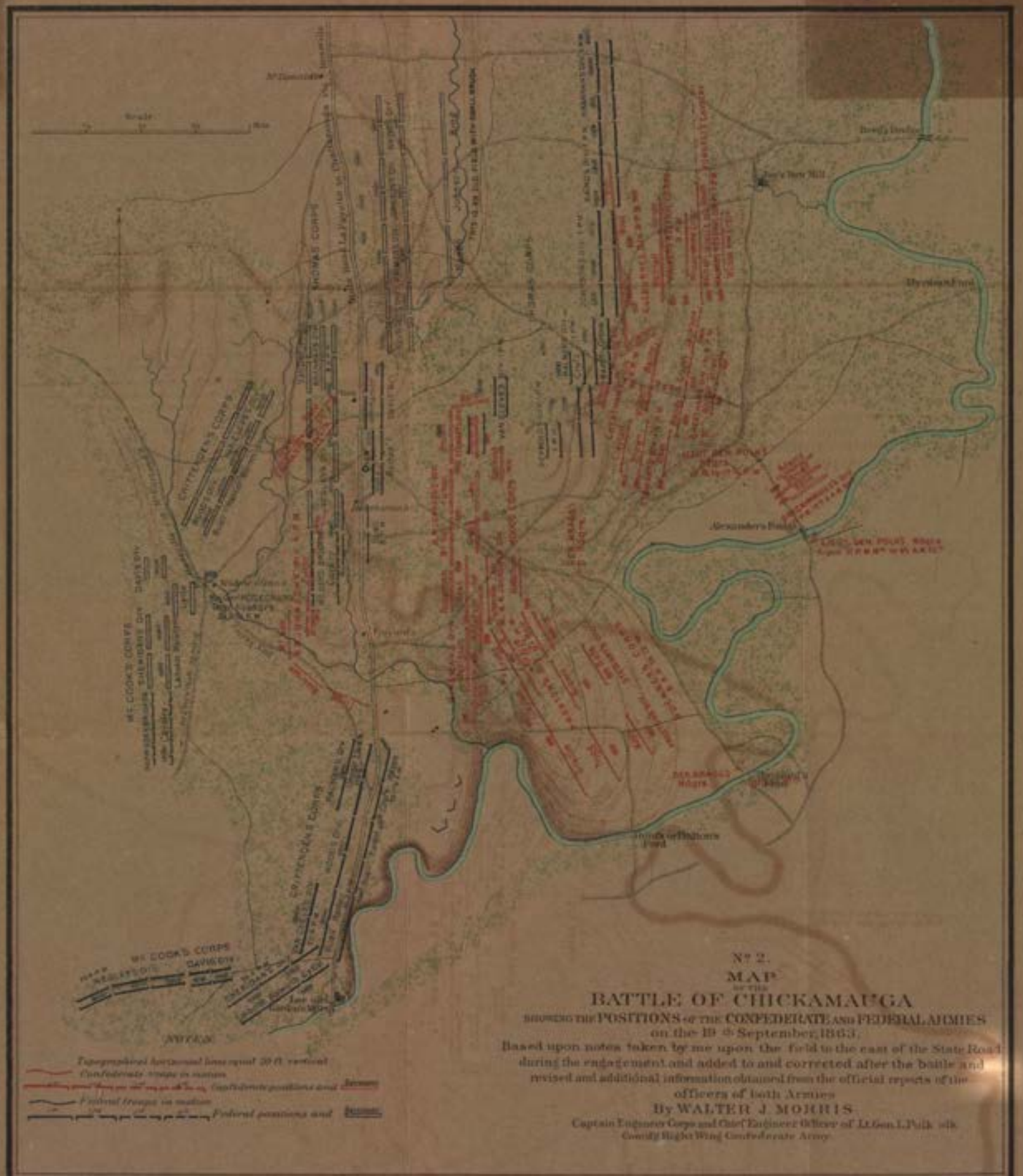
good part of his command. Skillfully extricating his command from the danger involved, Walker now slowly withdrew. It was then near 1 P.M., and it strongly appeared that Thomas would accomplish his design of driving the Confederate right to the stream. But Cheatham had been ordered to Walker's support. He formed his division to the left and rear of Walker in two lines across the road leading from Alexander's Bridge, and, moving up to Thomas's exultant divisions, struck their exposed right and threw it back in disorder.

General Polk, who had remained with Hindman to press the demonstration at Lee and Gordon's Mill, received orders at noon to withdraw this division as early as practicable, move it across the stream, and assume command of the operations in progress on the right. Hastily issuing the necessary orders to Hindman, he rode at once to the scene of conflict, which he reached just as Cheatham was moving forward to the assault we have already mentioned. From a reconnoissance of the position, necessarily brief, he formed the opinion that the forces under him were contending with Thomas's entire corps, and, perhaps, fractions of other corps. He reported this to General Bragg, and, as Walker had suffered severely, asked that another division might be placed at his disposition. In the meanwhile, Cheatham had become engaged and was steadily pressing forward, and Walker having reformed his command, Polk had ordered him to the right, so as to take position *en echelon* and cover Cheatham's right flank, Forrest covering the extreme right.

The Federal forces, righting their line, now moved against Cheatham's front so vigorously that he was compelled to yield. Half of Walker's command was now thrown forward on the right of Cheatham to meet the

pressure in that direction. Stewart's division of Buckner's corps now came upon the ground. Its arrival was most opportune. Cheatham's left had in turn been flanked by Reynolds, and his entire command was falling back. Lieutenant Richmond, General Polk's aide, familiar with the ground, and alive to the urgency of the situation, put Stewart in position on Cheatham's left, and pointed out the direction for his attack. Moving promptly forward, Stewart's division struck Reynolds's, and swept it out of the way. Continuing farther, he met Van Cleve's division on its way to the relief of Thomas, and drove it in disorder across the State road. While Stewart was executing this daring and brilliant advance, Cheatham, falling back, had reached a strong position, where he halted his line, ran forward Turner's battery, and opened so fierce a fire that the center of Thomas's line gave way. This occurred just as the Federal left reached Walker's line. Thomas, now, with Stewart on his right, Cheatham in front, and Walker on his left, was compelled to halt, and, after a stubborn effort, retired. After disposing of Van Cleve's division, Stewart pierced Rosecrans' center, and moved beyond the State road some four hundred yards; for the want of support he had then to retire, as Negley and Davis seriously threatened his rear. About sunset he took post some six hundred yards to the east of the State road.

General Thomas, finally realizing that General Polk was about to turn the tables and "use him up," retreated until he reached the position near the State road from which he had started out in the morning. Placing Johnston's and Baird's divisions in line of battle well in front, he supported them by Palmer's, Reynolds's, and Brannan's in the rear as a reserve, Brannan being placed *en echelon* to the right, in view of the attack from which Stewart was then retiring.



No 2.

MAP
OF THE
BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA
SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE CONFEDERATE AND FEDERAL ARMIES
on the 19th September, 1863.

Based upon notes taken by me upon the field to the east of the State Road during the engagement and added to and corrected after the battle and revised and additional information obtained from the official reports of the officers of both Armies

By WALTER J. MORRIS.

Captain Engineer Corps and Chief Engineer Officer of Lt.Gen.L.Polk's Command Right Wing Confederate Army

Cleburne's division reached the portion of the line where this stubborn conflict had been going on about 6 P.M. General Polk at once put him in line on the right of Cheatham and in front of Walker, and moved again upon the enemy. Cleburne and Cheatham were ordered to advance and attack, and Walker was directed to move in the rear as a support. Pending the execution of these orders, General Polk turned to Captain Wheeless of his staff, and said: "Go to General Bragg, and tell him that I feel certain, from the prisoners captured, we have been fighting Rosecrans' entire army. I am now placing Cleburne in position on the right, and will advance in a few moments on the enemy, and expect to drive them before us. Present my compliments to General Bragg, and assure him that I feel confident of success to-morrow." Cannon and musketry announced a renewal of the persistent conflict. Cheatham struck the enemy in front, Cleburne in front and flank, and the Federal line was driven back until darkness supervened. General Polk then halted his troops. The writer delivered the order to General Cheatham just at the moment when Brigadier-General Preston Smith was killed. He fell but a short distance from us, with the expiring volley of Thomas's line. He was one of the best soldiers in the army.

On the left of the Confederate line no event of note occurred prior to 2 P.M., when General Hood's skirmish line was driven in, and he assumed the aggressive. Taking, together with his own command, Trigg's brigade of Preston's division, he moved across the State road, driving the enemy's forces in his front. He soon encountered Wood's division and a portion of Sheridan's on his left and rear, and the divisions of Negley and Davis in front, which compelled him to withdraw his

troops some six hundred yards east of the road, where they were posted for the night. This conflict, though not as prolonged as that on the right, was very fierce while it lasted, and the loss was comparatively heavy. During the conflict upon the left General Bragg brought into action all the forces he had placed on that part of the field, excepting two brigades of Preston's division: these he held in position near the stream, and yet in sufficiently close proximity to the State road to enable him to check any ordinary attempt of the enemy upon that flank.

The day's fighting and manœuvering provided so good a test of the powers and resources of the two armies, that it is of interest for us to ascertain the force which was employed upon the two sides.

Adopting the kind of division into which the battle, from its beginning to its ending, seemed naturally to fall, we present the accompanying tabulation of the forces as they were opposed in the main upon the two wings.

General Bragg, Confederate Army.	General Rosecrans, Federal Army.[1]
Right wing,	Left wing,
General Polk commanding:	General Thomas commanding:
Walker's division,	Brannan's division,
Cheatham's "	Baird's "
Stewart's "	Johnston's "
Cleburne's "	Palmer's "
Forrest's cavalry (Pegram's division).	Reynolds's "
	Van Cleve's "
	Cavalry.
Total, 22,016.	Total, 25,000.

[1] The Federal force is estimated after a careful comparison of the field returns and reports.

General Bragg, Confederate Army.	General Rosecrans, Federal Army.
Left wing, General Hood commanding: Hood's corps, Trigg's brigade. Total, 8,428.	Right wing, General Crittenden commanding: Wood's division, Negley's " Davis's " (in part), Sheridan's " " Total, 10,000.

From this statement it will be seen that General Bragg had not succeeded in placing all his army in action that day. The divisions of Hindman and Breckinridge had been held respectively opposite Lee and Gordon's and Glass's Mills, while the two brigades of Preston's division had been utilized in the manner already mentioned. This force formed a total of 12,583 infantry and artillery. As to the enemy's force engaged on that day, General Rosecrans, in his official report of the battle, says:

> The reserve corps (Granger's) covered the approaches from the Chickamauga toward Rossville and the extension of our left, and the fact that at the close of the day we had present but two brigades which had not been opportunely and squarely in action, opposed to superior numbers of the enemy, assured us that we were greatly outnumbered, and that the battle of the next day must be for the safety of the army and the possession of Chattanooga.

This is well-merited testimony to the intrepidity of the Confederate soldiers and the skill of their commanders.

At the close of the day, while adjusting his line for the final attack, General Polk directed his engineer to locate his headquarters for the night at some central point in rear of his line. So many falsehoods have been

published concerning the relation of these headquarters to the line, I have deemed it proper to insert the statement which this officer, Captain W. J. Morris, made in regard to the matter.

About 5.30 P.M. General Polk desired me to locate his bivouac for the night, and informed me that he had directed his ambulance to be sent to Alexander's Bridge. At that moment we were at a point on the field where we had been the greater part of the day—somewhat to the right, and between the first and second lines of battle. About three hundred yards to our rear was the edge of the woods we were then in, and which covered the battlefield; from the edge of these woods Alexander's Bridge was in full view, about seven hundred yards away across a flat, low, open field. On leaving the general I rode my horse at a trot, and reached the bridge in three or four minutes. I found the headquarter ambulance on the south side of the Chickamauga; and on the east side of the road, immediately at the bridge, I directed the driver to turn into the woods just to his right, and I located the bivouac within fifty yards of the bridge. A part of the staff slept on either side of the road.

The place was in every way acceptable to General Polk, because it was entirely fitted for his purposes. Being on the route to army headquarters, which were at Thedford's Ford, in rear of the extreme left of the army, it was placed so that all communication between his wing and army headquarters must pass directly by him; being also a conspicuous point, one well known to the army, it was free from the chance of not being found by the numerous interests depending upon him. The confusion which prevailed that night in rear of all parts of the line on that wooded and smoke- and fog-obscured battlefield accentuated the wisdom of the selection.

About 9 P.M. General Polk rode from his line to army

headquarters to report the operations of the command under him, and to receive instructions for the coming day.

After the report was made General Bragg announced that the army would be officially divided into two wings, the right wing to be under General Polk, and the left wing to be under General Longstreet, who was then expected every moment.

This arrangement was, in reality, but a continuance of that upon which the battle of the day had been fought, and involved no change of commanders except on the left, for General Polk had conducted the operations on the right, while General Hood had directed the operations on the left, pending the arrival of his superior, General Longstreet. But this disposition had one serious disadvantage,— it ignored General Hill, and for that reason was not altogether satisfactory to General Polk, who saw in the arrangement an injustice and a needless affront to General Hill, who had but just received his promotion and come to that army.

It was quite as easy for General Bragg to have made three divisions of his army. General Hill, with his corps intact, was already on the right, and General Polk in the center; it only remained to assign Longstreet to the left. It came out in the conference, however, that General Bragg was greatly irritated against General Hill for his failure to coöperate with Hindman in McLemore's Cove the morning of the 10th, and for what he characterized subsequently as his "querulous and insubordinate spirit in general;" and he left the impression that, to save himself contention in the emergencies of the battle, he would ignore him, and, continuing as he had begun, would fight his army in two wings.

The forces assigned to General Polk were in the main

those with which he had fought upon the right that day, the exceptions being Stewart's and Breckinridge's divisions. The former was detached to the left wing, and the latter was added to the right, the addition restoring the integrity of Hill's corps, which, in common with all others in the army, excepting General Hood's, had been disjointed to meet the requirements of the day's fighting. Hindman's division of Polk's corps was assigned to the left wing, and, together with some of the Virginia troops to arrive the following morning, completed the formation of that wing.

Verbal instructions were given to General Polk to attack at daylight by the division on the extreme right, from which the attack was to be taken up, by divisions, successively, to the left, the design being to renew the effort to turn the enemy's left and by direct attack force him into McLemore's Cove.

During this interview General Polk suggested that a larger force than that which had been allowed should be massed upon the right. He urged upon General Bragg's attention the inference from the day's fighting — that Rosecrans would be accumulating his forces in front of the right wing of the Confederate line. General Polk further emphasized the fact that Granger's corps at Rossville was in a position from which to assail in flank and rear the force that might succeed in turning the Federal left. But the commanding general held to the opinion that the bulk of the enemy were nearer Lee and Gordon's Mill than General Polk supposed, and consequently more nearly in front of the left, and that the disposition made was therefore the proper one.

Informing General Bragg of his location for the night, General Polk rode direct to his quarters at Alexander's Bridge. On the way he was met and accompanied by

General Breckinridge, who reported his division lying near the bridge. As his men had just come from the extreme left and were much fatigued, it was agreed that the command should rest for a while in an open field just west of the bridge, but General Polk directed him to be in line by dawn. He then invited General Breckinridge to bivouac with him.

Immediately on reaching his quarters, the following order was issued:

HEADQUARTERS, RIGHT WING, ARMY OF TENNESSEE,
NEAR ALEXANDER'S BRIDGE,
September 19, 1863, 11.30 P.M.

Circular.

1st. Lt.-Gen. Hill on the right will attack the enemy with his corps to-morrow morning at daylight.

2d. Maj.-Gen. Cheatham on Hill's left will make a simultaneous attack.

3d. Maj.-Gen. Walker's corps will act as reserve.

Corps and division commanders will see that their troops are amply supplied with ammunition before daylight.

By command of

LT.-GEN. POLK,
THOS. M. JACK, *A. A.-G.*

To

LT.-GEN. D. H. HILL.
MAJ.-GEN. CHEATHAM.
MAJ.-GEN. WALKER.

Copies of this order were placed in the hands of reliable couriers, with instructions to deliver them at once. In order to facilitate the approach of any one seeking for General Polk, sentinels were placed at the bridge and upon the road directly opposite the camp, and were instructed to build fires and to keep a sharp lookout, especially for Generals Hill, Cheatham, and Walker. These sentinels remained at their posts until 2 A.M. and were then withdrawn, General Walker and a staff-officer

of General Hill (Lieutenant Reid), as well as several other persons, having meanwhile been directed to General Polk.[1]

While the orders for the coming day were being issued, General Polk and General Breckinridge talked over, at supper, the plans and prospects for the ensuing day. Breckinridge then withdrew to General Polk's tent for a short sleep before marching his men to the line.

The orders for Generals Cheatham and Walker were delivered promptly. But it was General Polk's misfortune that the courier sent to General Hill failed to find him, although he searched diligently for him, not only at Thedford's Ford, the point designated as the one at which General Polk would find General Hill, but along his line of battle as well, to which the courier subsequently extended his search.[2]

In the light of after-events, it was an error to entrust the order to but one channel; but it must be said that General Polk very properly regarded his headquaterrs as but one of the two under obligation to communicate with General Hill that night, and also that he counted with certainty upon seeing that officer speedily at his headquarters, having in person delivered messages to that effect to two of General Hill's staff — which messages were received,[3] one of them as early as midnight.[4]

It appears, however, that General Polk was the only one who made any attempt to reach General Hill. The commanding general, although he had but just detached him (about ten that night) from his own headquarters and assigned him to General Polk, who till then had

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, pp. 58–60.
2 *Ibid.*, p. 57.
3 *Ibid.*, p. 64.
4 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

had no authority over Hill, neither communicated this fact, nor indeed anything to Hill, until the next morning at eight o'clock, when he met him on his line of battle.

It appears that General Hill was approaching army headquarters when he received General Polk's message that he had been placed under his (Polk's) orders, and that he wished to see him at his quarters that night.[1] Instead of reporting himself at one headquarters or the other, General Hill unfortunately waited until near four o'clock, — more than three hours, — and then, passing almost through Polk's camp, accompanied by his staff, rode on to his line.

At five o'clock General Polk learned of the failure to find and deliver the orders to General Hill. Duplicates of the following order were then sent direct to General Hill's division commanders.

HEADQUARTERS, RIGHT WING,
NEAR ALEXANDER'S BRIDGE,
Sept. 20, 1863, 5.30 A.M.

General: The lieutenant-general commanding having sought in vain for Gen. Hill, gives you directly the following order:

Move upon and attack the enemy as soon as you are in position.

Maj.-Gen. Cheatham on your left has been ordered to make a simultaneous attack.

Respectfully, general, your obedient servant,

THOS. M. JACK, *A. A.-G.*

MAJ.-GEN. CLEBURNE.
MAJ.-GEN. BRECKINRIDGE.

After this order was dispatched, and as General Polk was about to ride to his line, an inquiry came from General Bragg as to the cause of the delay. In reply it was explained that General Hill had not been found, and that orders had been sent to his division commanders. Gen-

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 140.

eral Polk also told Major Lee (the officer who bore the inquiry) to say to General Bragg that some further delay would necessarily result from the failure to reach General Hill in proper time. The story of the delivery of the order to General Hill's subordinates, taken in connection with all that had gone before, is of such interest that it is given entire.

[*Statement of J. Frank Wheeless.*]

IN CAMP, September 30, 1863.

The following is a statement of facts within my knowledge relating to the engagement on Sunday, Sept. 20:

On the morning of the 20th inst., between daylight and sunrise, Lieutenant-General Polk sent for me to carry orders to Major-Generals Cleburne and Breckinridge to make an immediate attack upon the enemy. I went directly to Colonel Jack, Assistant Adjutant-General, to get orders. As he handed them to me, he remarked that during the night General Polk sent orders to General Hill to make the attack at daylight, that it was now after that time, and the person who carried the order had returned and reported that he had searched in every part of the field and could not find General Hill, and that the orders he (Colonel Jack) was then giving me were sent direct to the division commanders to make the attack at once. General Polk's last remark to me was, not to lose time, but ride as rapidly as possible.

This I did. Passing by Major-General Cheatham's headquarters in rear of his line, I left with him a copy of the orders I had for Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne, and said to him that it was for his information, and he was expected to conform to the movements.

I proceeded rapidly along the line of battle until I found General Cleburne's command, in rear of which I found Lieutenant-General Hill and Major-Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne around a camp-fire. On dismounting, I remarked that I had orders from General Polk. General Hill put forth his hand as if to receive the orders, when I said, "These orders

are for Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne," and then, in explanation of why the orders were sent direct to the division commanders, I told General Hill that during the night General Polk sent him orders to make the attack at daylight, but the bearer of the order could not find him, and when General Polk became aware of this, he sent these orders—these orders just delivered—to the division commanders. Either General Cleburne or General Breckinridge, when he had read the order, handed it to General Hill and remarked that the men could not go into the fight until they had their rations distributed to them, to which General H(ill) consented. I then asked General H(ill) if he had anything he desired to say to General Polk. He remarked that General Polk had promised to have a courier at the bridge to show him [General H(ill)] the way to his (General Polk's) headquarters, but that he could not find the courier when he went there. He then requested me to wait and he would write a note to General Polk. I said to General Hill I knew General Polk had couriers placed at the bridge; that they remained there until late, but the hour I did not know. I waited some ten minutes or more for General Hill's note, and then started back to General Polk. On my way I met Captain (J. M.) Williams with duplicate orders of the ones I had just delivered. I informed him that I had delivered the original orders, consequently there was not any use in his going further, but requested him to go up to General Cheatham and say to him that it would be an hour or two before General Hill was ready to attack the enemy. This he did. Some two hundred yards farther on I met General Polk on his way to the field. I turned back, and he stopped for me to read General Hill's note. When I had finished I said, "General, you notice General Hill says it will be an hour or so before he is ready to make the attack. I am confident that it will be more than two hours before he is ready to make the attack." General Polk said to me he was going out to inspect his lines, and ordered me to keep his escort there and establish his headquarters just on the right of where they had been the day before. Some fifteen minutes after General Polk left, General

Bragg came up and asked me where he was. I replied that he had gone along the line to make an inspection and find out the cause of the delay in making the attack. I remarked that General Polk would return there, but that he (General Bragg) would no doubt find him sooner by going along the line; and I then said: "General, in case you should not find General Polk, I will tell you what has been done this morning: General Polk sent orders to General Hill in time for the attack to have been made by daylight if General Hill could have been found; but this was impossible, and when General Polk learned this he sent orders by me to Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne to make an immediate attack. Major-General Cheatham was informed of this and ordered to conform with the movements; I found Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne and Hill together, and delivered the orders to Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne in the presence of General Hill." I then told General Bragg the contents of General Hill's note to General Polk, and I said I did not believe General Hill would be ready to move to the attack in two hours, but that he should have done so at daylight. General Bragg asked me how I expected General Hill to make the attack before he received orders to do so. I said: "General, you will remember, when General Polk sent me to you yesterday evening, you instructed me to say that you would send a staff-officer for him and the other generals, as you wished to have a conference with them. My last remark was made under the impression that General Hill was, of course, present at that conference and understood that he was to make the attack at daylight, and that General Polk has renewed the orders himself so that there could not possibly be any mistake." I then said: "General, General Cleburne reported to General Hill this morning, while I was there, that the enemy were felling trees on his front all night." General Bragg said: "Well, sir, is this not another important reason why the attack should be made at once?" I said: "Yes, sir, it does certainly seem so to me; but it did not seem to impress General Hill in that way."[1]

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 61.

The note brought by Captain Wheeless was this:

Sept. 20, 1863.

General: I could find no courier at Alexander's Bridge, and therefore could not find you. My divisions are getting their rations, and will not be ready to move for an hour or more. Breckinridge's wagons seem to have got lost between Thedford's Ford and this place.

It will be well for you to examine the line from one end to the other before starting.

Brigadier-General Jackson is running from east to west. My line is from north to south. General Cleburne reports that the Yankees were felling trees all night, and consequently now occupying a position too strong to be taken by assault. What shall be done when the point is reached?

Respectfully,

D. H. HILL, *Lieutenant-General.*

After reading this note General Polk sent General Bragg the following:

IN THE FIELD, Sept. 20, 1863, 7 A.M.

General: I am this moment in receipt of my first communication from General Hill, who informs me that he will not be ready to move for an hour or more because his troops are receiving rations, and because his wagons were lost last night. The attack will be made so soon as he is prepared for it.

Respectfully, general, your obedient servant,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General Commanding.*

BRIGADIER-GENERAL MACKALL, *Chief of Staff, A. A.-G.*[1]

1 In writing of the order sent to his subordinates, General Hill stated in his official report that it was received by him at 7.25 A.M. Unfortunately, that morning he omitted writing the hour upon the note he sent General Polk by Captain Wheeless in return, but as Polk's note to Bragg, announcing the reception of Hill's note, is dated 7 A.M., there clearly is a discrepancy. Collateral testimony can determine which is correct.

To determine the relation of the terms "sunrise" and "sundown" to actual time, it should be stated that sunrise in that latitude on that date

About an hour after this note was sent, General Polk, who meanwhile had seen General Hill and all the division commanders, met General Bragg on the center of his line. He then made an extended report of the causes of the delay, and showed him that he was only waiting for Hill's command to be ready.

In view of the fact that General Bragg washed his hands of all responsibility touching General Hill from the moment that he turned him over to Polk at ten o'clock the night before, it is of importance to follow him to General Hill's line and learn what occurred there.

General Bragg rode up about 8 A.M., and inquired of me (Hill) why I had not begun the attack at daylight. I told him that I was then hearing for the first time that such an order had been issued, and had not known whether we were to be assailants or assailed. He said angrily: "I found Polk after sunrise sitting down reading a newspaper at Alexander's Bridge, two miles from the line of battle, when he ought to have been fighting."[1]

It is not worth while to dwell upon the inconsistencies of Hill's reply to General Bragg in this interview as to his ignorance of the attitude which his corps was expected to assume that morning. Waiving the information which he had just received from Captain Wheeless and General Polk on that subject, it is well to point out,

was 5.47, but the usual interval between dawn and sunrise was shortened that morning by the obscurity due to the dense fog and the smoke.

The order in question was dated 5.30. Captain Wheeless took it as soon as written, and consumed fifteen minutes in its transmission. Breckinridge says in his official report that it was received soon after sunrise. Sunrise being fixed at 5.47, this statement of Breckinridge, sustained as it is by the date on the order and by Wheeless's statement, establishes the time at which Hill received the order as some time between 6 and 6.30 at the latest. Add to this the time of Polk's note to Bragg, — 7 A.M., — and the evidence is conclusive as to General Hill's error.

[1] "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. iii, p. 653.

however, that he probably was the only man in that army who was ignorant of the purpose for which it had crossed the Chickamauga, and the only officer of any prominence who was unaware of the fact that the success of the day before, in which he had taken part, was but the first step in the program of aggression.

It is a matter of some importance to call attention to the commanding general's attitude toward General Polk in this interview. The truth of his statement is disproved in the footnote next below,[1] and had it possessed a bearing merely personal to General Polk, it would require no other notice. But it went further.

General Polk and General Hill were of equal rank, and commanded the companion corps of the army. General Hill, coming from another army, had just been promoted, and this was his first battle in his new position and with his new surroundings. When General Bragg met him that morning, he had already learned that he had been made

[1] The charge is best stated in the following extract from a letter written by General Bragg to Major E. T. Sykes, of Columbus, Miss., bearing date February 8, 1873. Referring to a question as to General Polk's responsibility for the delay in the attack on the morning of the 20th, General Bragg replied:

"This question is best answered by my official report, and I send you by this day's mail a written copy, which I must beg you to preserve and return, as it is invaluable to me. In addition to what is there said, I can now add — but would not put it in an official report — that the staff-officer sent to General Polk, — Major Lee, A. I.-G., — to urge his compliance with the orders of the previous night, reported to me that he found him at a farmhouse, three miles from the line of his troops, about one hour after sunrise, sitting on the gallery reading a newspaper, and waiting, as he (the general) said, for his breakfast."

In answer to this statement the writer submits the following:

1st. General Polk's headquarters were at Alexander's Bridge, located in a spot cleared of undergrowth and small trees the day before by troops temporarily camped there, — no farmhouse was near. The spot was about 1200 yards in rear of General Walker's line. (See map of field and statement of Captain Morris, the engineer-officer who located the camp already given.) The writer saw Major Lee deliver General Bragg's

subordinate to General Polk, but he had not heard it from General Bragg; it had come to him indirectly. He now received it from the commanding general direct, who accompanied the announcement with an accusation which discredited it at once. As might have been expected, Bragg's attitude was not lacking in fruit, as was discovered by those who had occasion to carry orders to General Hill that day.

The incident furnishes a characteristic index of General Bragg's conception of the requirements of army discipline. Any other commander, conscious of the truth of his statement, would have arrested General Polk without a moment's hesitation, and in so doing have but vindicated himself and his army, and have administered the only punishment adequate to the offense charged.

In compliance with instructions from General Bragg the night before, General Polk's line retained the position it had occupied at the close of the previous day.

Breckinridge's division was placed in one line on the extreme right, covering the Reed's Bridge road, with

message to General Polk at this camp. General Polk had then breakfasted, and was preparing to mount his horse to ride to the front.

2d. The time of this interview is nearly enough fixed by the following reply made by General Cheatham to an inquiry from General Polk, which was made in relation to this very interview with Major Lee:

"To the best of my recollection, I saw you at Turner's Battery about sunrise, you having, as I understood, just returned from the right of your lines." ("Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 63.)

In conclusion, the following extract is given from a letter from Major Frank McNairy, General Cheatham's aide-de-camp:

"I left General Cheatham's headquarters before daylight the morning of the battle, and went to General Polk's headquarters with a message from General Cheatham to General Polk. When I got there, which was about daylight, I found General Polk and staff on their horses, about moving to the field, which they did at once; they got there before I did, as I stopped to water my horse, as he had not had water for twenty-four hours. When I arrived on the field, he was there; the sun was not more than up when I got to the field."

Forrest's cavalry on its flank, Cleburne in one line next to Breckinridge, and Cheatham in two lines on the left. Walker's division was in reserve in the rear of Cleburne and Cheatham, the three constituting Polk's column of attack.

This disposition was faulty, however, as it made Cleburne and Breckinridge dependent upon reserves outside their own organizations. It would have been better to place Walker in the line, two brigades in front, two in reserve; then Cleburne and Breckinridge, without shortening the general line, each could have placed a brigade in reserve. But an entire division in reserve was directed by General Bragg for both wings. This compelled the formation of Hill's corps in one line, as the ground from Cheatham's right to the Reed's Bridge road had to be covered in order to gain the proper distance beyond the enemy's flank. Assuming that the general line of battle was correct, the formation of the right wing was, under the circumstances, the proper one, and General Bragg, who ordered it, confirmed this opinion after an examination. It turned out, however, that the general line of battle was faultily arranged. "As soon as the day of the 20th had dawned," Longstreet, who had arrived the night before, rode to the front to find his troops. He "set to work to have the line adjusted by closing to the right, in order to occupy some vacant ground between the two wings and to make room for Hood in the front line."[1] This movement threw Stewart — who moved some five hundred or six hundred yards — across the whole of Cheatham's front, and encroached upon Cleburne's line of advance. It brought his right in contact with the enemy, who, upon Polk's front, occupied a position in advance of that opposite

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 288.

Longstreet, and, in consequence, Stewart had to refuse his right. Owing to the distance between Stewart's rear and Cheatham's front (about six hundred yards), and also to the thick undergrowth, the fog, and the smoke, Cheatham's skirmishers did not discover the change of position for some time, and when reported it was too late to rectify the error. The lack of interest which General Bragg took in the formation of his general line of battle was thus a misfortune to the entire army, and particularly to the right wing, because it was made to cover more ground than was necessary, and in so doing was obliged to extend itself unduly. If General Bragg had located his wings himself, he would have released Cheatham from his position, and in so doing have given a double formation to his right wing throughout; but he left this —as he did most of the affairs of the battle—to his wing commanders, who did the best they could under the circumstances in which he had placed them.

The formation of Longstreet's line from left to right was as follows: Hindman's division was placed on the extreme left; Wheeler's cavalry on the flank. Hood's corps was next to Hindman's, and Stewart's division was on the right. Each division had two brigades in front and one in reserve. Preston's division was placed in reserve on the left, resting on the river.

Longstreet's preponderance of force, and the relative shortness of the interval to be covered, enabled him to form in his center a heavy column of attack, consisting of Johnson's, Law's, and Kershaw's commands, constituting Hood's corps, the whole forming a column of eight brigades, arranged in four lines. The formation of the left wing was completed about 10.30, an hour subsequent to the attack of the right wing.

During the evening of the 19th General Rosecrans as-

sembled his corps commanders and gave them orders for the following day.

General Thomas, with his flank covered by cavalry, was to hold the position to which he had been driven, about three hundred yards east of the State road, his command to form in three lines, placing Baird's division on the extreme left; next to Baird's, successively, on the right, the divisions of Johnson, Palmer, and Reynolds. Brannan's division was to be posted in reserve to the right and rear of Reynolds.

Negley's division was to take post on the right of Reynolds; next on the right was McCook, with the divisions of Davis and Sheridan. Wilder's mounted infantry and the cavalry covered the right.

Crittenden, with his remaining two divisions, Van Cleve's and Wood's, was to take position in the rear of Thomas's and McCook's corps, so as to be able to support either.

These commands, as soon as posted, commenced to erect temporary breastworks. It was understood that the left of the line was to be held at all hazards, as the safety of the army depended upon it.

The total force[1] brought into action on the 20th was as follows:

[1] This statement of the forces brought into action by General Bragg on the 20th is based upon the original returns of the Army of Tennessee, among his papers now in New Orleans, La., in the possession of his heirs. (See Proceedings of United Confederate Veterans, Surgeon-General Joseph Jones, Paper No. II, 1892.) In the statement of Surgeon-General Jones, the division of Bushrod Johnson is evidently omitted from the total of the left wing; this total is therefore made up to correspond with General Longstreet's statement for that day. ("Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 291.)

The statement of the forces brought into action Sept. 20 by General Rosecrans is based upon the returns of the Army of the Cumberland, Sept. 20, 1863, making the deductions authorized by General Henry M. Cist. [Army of the Cumberland, Campaigns of the Civil War (Scribner), 1882, p. 228.]

General Bragg.		General Rosecrans.	
Infantry and artillery,		Infantry and artillery,	46,000
Right wing.....	20,240	Cavalry	9,000
Left wing	22,879		
Cavalry (divided about equally between the wings)	7,500		
Total	50,619	Total	55,000
Number of pieces of artillery, 150.		Number of pieces of artillery, 192.	

As the two lines of battle now stood, General Thomas, with Baird's, Johnston's, Palmer's, and a part of Reynolds's division, each division in three lines, was opposed to General Hill with the divisions of Cleburne, Breckinridge, and Walker.

The remainder of Reynolds's division, with Brannan's *en echelon*, was in front of Stewart's and Cheatham's divisions.

Negley's division, with Wood's and Van Cleve's in reserve, under Crittenden, was in front of Hood's corps.

The divisions of Davis and Sheridan, under McCook, with Wilder's brigade of mounted infantry, were in front of Hindman's division.

About the time the action began, Negley's division was withdrawn from its position, and moved to the rear of Thomas's corps, as a support to the left; Wood's division moving forward and taking Negley's place in the line between Reynolds's and Davis's divisions. The Federal line during the night had succeeded in covering itself throughout with temporary breastworks.

It will be noted, from the disposition made of the enemy's forces on their left, that there were opposed to the forces under Polk four divisions in three lines, with Brannan's and Negley's divisions as a support; beside

these, a division of Granger's corps, some 5000 strong, was on the flank, four miles away, threatening the Confederate right. In addition, every corps commander understood that the left of the line was to be held at all hazards. The bearing of all this upon General Polk's suggestion when he received his orders from General Bragg the night before is too obvious for even comment.

THE BATTLE OF THE 20TH.

Intending that Cheatham should take part in the advance, Walker had been posted so that he might be used as a support to this division or Cleburne's as occasion demanded; but, learning of the relation held by Cheatham to the left wing, General Polk, about nine o'clock, moved Walker in rear of Cleburne. While executing this movement, General Hill reported that it would be necessary to protect Breckinridge against a counter-flank attack that was threatened by Granger. Polk accordingly directed Walker to continue his march to Breckinridge's relief. Between 9.30 and 10 o'clock Hill's corps, preceded by a heavy line of skirmishers, advanced to the attack.

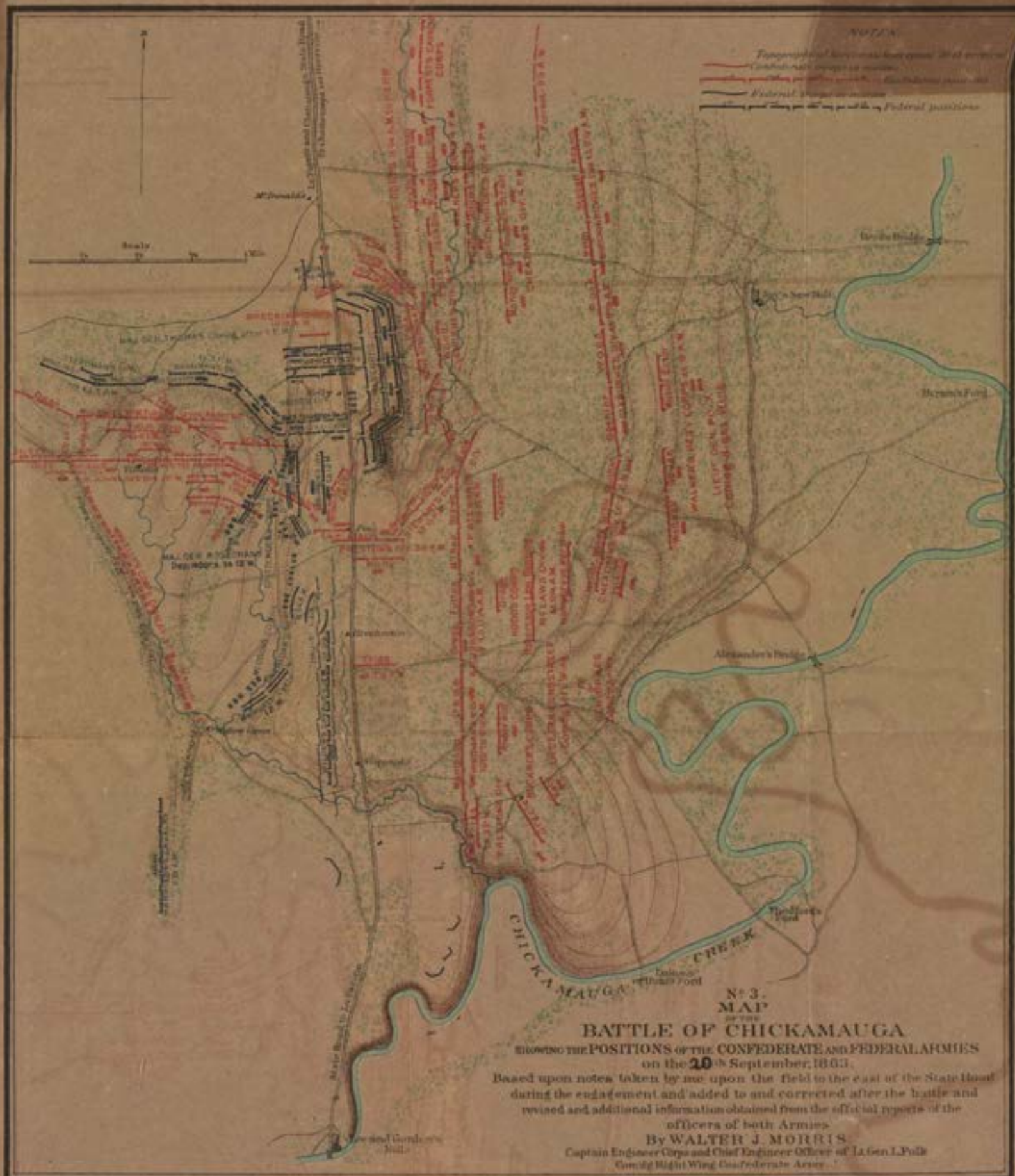
As the line neared the enemy, Deshler's and a large part of Wood's brigades of Cleburne's division overlapped Stewart's division in its rear, and therefore could not take part in the assault. Lucius Polk's brigade, and Lowry's regiment of Wood's brigade, struck the works squarely in front, but were too weak to force them. Unable to advance farther, and determined not to retreat, Polk[1] ordered the commands to lie down and hold their position, which was about a hundred and seventy-

[1] Son of William Polk, Col. William Polk's second son.

five yards from the enemy's works. Helm's brigade, of Breckinridge's division, struck the left flank of the works. After two desperate and unavailing efforts to carry them, it was compelled to retire, but not until its leader had sealed his devotion to his cause with his life.

Stovall's and Adams's brigades — the remaining brigades of Breckinridge's division — passed clear of the works to the State road in the rear, and, under General Breckinridge's direction, bore down on the left flank and rear of the enemy.

While Breckinridge was advancing to the execution of this movement, Walker's command, increased by the arrival of Gist's brigade, came up. It arrived as Helm was finally repulsed, and while Breckinridge was moving forward upon the enemy's rear, on the State road. Polk now gave General Hill the opportunity of his life,— he ordered him to take Walker's command and attack the enemy in his front, saying to him that he would entrust the operations there to him, while he saw to Cleburne and Cheatham. Walker, in his report, gives a graphic account of the manner in which Hill failed of his opportunity. By disrupting the command, sending it in detail, he failed not only to properly support Breckinridge, but secured the speedy defeat of both commands. Had he moved it *en masse* and at once into the interval left by the repulse of Helm, it is easy to believe the enemy's left might have been turned. It is important that any one studying this part of the battle should determine the time of Walker's arrival upon that part of the field, because upon that depends, to a great extent, the value of the opportunity. Upon this point Walker is very explicit: "He [Hill] ordered General Gist's brigade immediately into the fight in rear of Breckinridge, a part of whose division had fallen back, and the whole of which



No 3.
MAP
OF THE
BATTLE OF CHICKAMAUGA
SHOWING THE POSITIONS OF THE CONFEDERATE AND FEDERAL ARMIES
on the 20th September, 1863.
Based upon notes taken by me upon the field to the east of the State Road during the engagement and added to and corrected after the battle and revised and additional information obtained from the official reports of the officers of both Armies
By WALTER J. MORRIS
Captain Engineer Corps and Chief Engineer Officer of Lt Gen L Polk Comdg Right Wing Confederate Army

was hard pressed."[1] Hill's report also makes it clear that Walker came up while Breckinridge was moving to the flank attack,[2] in ample time to have aided him had he been moved forward intact, to his left. Walker's command had been divided into two small divisions, one under Gist, the other under Liddell. Gist moved forward into the interval and assaulted the left of the works held by Baird. Meanwhile Breckinridge, changing direction at the State road, had reached a point well to the rear of the enemy's left; here he was met by the reinforcements, which the attack of the left wing was drawing from the enemy's right, and was driven back. Retiring in good order, he fell back to the position of his remaining brigade (Helm's). The detour which he was compelled to make in this retreat exposed Gist to the combined fire of the enemy's left, against which he gallantly contended for half an hour before retiring. While Gist was thus engaged, General Hill directed Govan's brigade, of Walker's command,[3] to move to the State road and support him by an attack upon the enemy's rear. The forces which had been hurried to this part of the field to meet Breckinridge's attack now fell upon Govan, and, turning his left, compelled him in turn to withdraw. This completed the repulse of the right wing. During these movements upon his right General Polk had occupied himself in arranging for Cleburne's support. Jackson's brigade, of Cheatham's division, was

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 241.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 142; and also General Gist's report, p. 245.

3 General Hill, on page 144 of his official report, says that Walker's corps made a second attack that morning on the State road. This is an error, as is shown by the reports of Walker, and Walker's division and brigade commanders, to none of which General Hill had access at the time his report was written. The attack of which General Hill speaks is that of Govan's brigade here described.

detached to Cleburne's right, and the remainder of the division was directed to take position in his rear. Cleburne meanwhile had extricated his left brigade from its position behind Stewart, and, retiring his line a short distance, was re-forming it. About noon General Polk returned to the right, and finding one of Walker's brigades (Walthal's) unoccupied, directed it to move forward and connect with Jackson's brigade on the right.[1]

Cleburne having suffered materially in the repulse, the gallant General Deshler being among the killed, Polk now ordered Cheatham to replace him. While executing this movement, a message from General Hill was received, stating that his right was again threatened by Granger's corps. This force of the enemy, as has been said, was holding a position some four miles to the Confederate right when the action began. At 11 A.M. it started to the support of Thomas's corps, and, although retarded by Forrest, moved vigorously forward.

Feeling the importance of protecting his right against this counter-flank movement of the enemy, Polk ordered Cleburne to hold his position, and directed Cheatham to move to the right with his division, to meet the movement of Granger; but Granger, making a detour to the west of the State road, moved to the rear of Thomas's line, leaving a brigade to observe the Confederate right.

It was now about 2 P.M. Granger having ceased threatening his flank, Polk readjusted his line from left to right, preparatory to another assault. The enemy's works being visible through the open woods in front of Cleburne, that officer was directed to mass his artillery and open fire on the enemy, introductory to the advance. Promptly moving his guns to within two hundred yards

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, p. 274.

of the enemy's lines, a destructive fire was opened on them. This was about 3 P.M.

About an hour after the advance of the right wing, General Longstreet had completed the arrangement of his line, and stood prepared to take up the contest as it reached him from the right; but the repulse of the right deranged the plan of battle. Owing to the advanced position of the enemy's left, Cleburne could move no farther forward than on a line with Stewart's division, the right of the left wing; and as the orders were for the divisions on the left to move only in connection with the divisions next on the right, Stewart did not move; consequently, the remainder of the left wing remained passive.

Perceiving the right wing unable to advance, Longstreet sought permission to move directly upon the enemy in his front. The commanding general, however, had already seen the necessity of the movement, and, accordingly, orders to that effect had been sent directly to the division commanders.

Stewart, with a portion of Wood's brigade of Cleburne's division, was the first to advance, but, encountering a terrific front-and-flank fire from Reynolds, whose line was here retired to the rear and right, he was driven back, after gallant efforts to force the position.

Hood's corps, next on the left, was more fortunate. Hill's assault in the morning had so impressed Thomas, he called repeatedly upon Rosecrans for aid. Negley's division had already been taken from the right and sent to him. Van Cleve's division was ordered to follow. Sheridan was ordered to go with two brigades, and was executing the order when Hindman's division compelled him to confront it. There remained, to oppose the forces under Longstreet, a part of Reynolds's, Wood's,

Davis's, and Sheridan's divisions in front, with Van Cleve's and a part of Brannan's in reserve, and Wilder's brigade of mounted infantry.

With a view to making his line compact, General Rosecrans had directed Wood to close to the left on Reynolds, McCook being ordered to follow the movement. Wood, misunderstanding the order, withdrew from the line, and passed to the rear of Brannan, whose force was *en echelon* to the right and rear of Reynolds's division. This movement of Wood's left a gap of a division front on the Federal right. Before it could be closed, Hood's quadruple line had swept in. The rear of Wood's division and the right of Brannan's were driven in confusion to the right; Davis was thrust in like disorder to the left, exposing Sheridan upon his right. Hindman attacked Sheridan and Wilder in front, and, after suffering the repulse of his left brigade, succeeded, with the aid of one from Preston, in driving the enemy before him. The entire Federal right was routed; one of Van Cleve's brigades was captured entire. Sheridan's division, two brigades of Davis's division, and General Rosecrans disappeared from the field.

The triumph achieved by Hood's command was marred by the serious wounding of this daring commander. He had to suffer the amputation of a leg upon the field.

The command of the Federal army, now shorn of six brigades, devolved upon General Thomas. The remnant of its right wing quickly formed at right angles to the State road, extending well off to the west. The troops took position on a ridge under cover of the forest in the following order: Brannan on the right, and two brigades of Wood's on the left; to this line General Thomas subsequently added two brigades from Negley's division and Hazen's brigade, and later Steedman's division of Gran-

ger's corps, whose movements prior to this we have already noticed. At a still later period General Thomas tried to fill the gap in this line, which still remained at the State road, by retiring Reynolds's right, but it was not sufficient. Consequently an interval upon Reynolds's right remained open. Had this been discovered, and had the attacks which were directed against Brannan, Wood, and Steedman been directed instead against this point, the Federal line would have been quickly pierced.

General Longstreet's divisions, having cleared their front, now changed their direction to the right, and moved upon the enemy in their new position. Preston was moved up, and took position upon the State road. Buckner massed several batteries upon this road, and opened a fire upon the angle of the enemy's line.

As already noted, Cleburne had opened his batteries upon the center of the enemy's left, and the entire line under Polk was ready to renew the assault.

In making his disposition for the afternoon attack, Polk found that Hill was very much opposed to executing it as ordered, and showed a singular unwillingness to act. Polk's orders were that Cleburne, keeping up his cannonade, should threaten the enemy in his front, and that Hill, taking Walker, Breckinridge, and Cheatham — now massed on the extreme right — should assail the enemy's left on the State road. The order to advance was given to Hill at 3.30, and had to be twice repeated[1] before he moved. While waiting for Hill, Captain Carnes of the artillery, whose battery had been demolished in the battle of the day before, and who was acting for the day on Polk's staff, reported that the enemy acted as if their am-

[1] Hill says that his delay was due to the difficulty experienced in getting Jackson's brigade to move into its position; but this was not an essential to his movements.

munition was running low. Polk sent him at once to Lucius Polk with the order to attack. Polk's brigade, supported by Jackson on the right, dashed at the works, and after a most gallant effort they seized the line that had opposed such stubborn resistance to Helm and Gist earlier in the day. All the troops now advanced (5 P.M.), but the battle of the right wing was practically ended. Preparatory to a retreat, Thomas was withdrawing Reynolds to post him *en echelon* to his left. Intending at nightfall to retire successively Johnston, Palmer, and Baird to a new line, they had been ordered to hold themselves in readiness for the movement. The assault of Polk's and Jackson's brigades, supported by Hill's advance, anticipated this movement, and converted it into a most "precipitate retreat."

Reynolds, however, well in hand, turned upon the exultant Confederates, and, striking a final blow at Walker, disappeared with his companions. It was the last flare of that fierce flame which for two days had burned so fiercely along that line.

I cannot do better than quote Carnes's graphic account of Polk's assault:

> Riding by the side of General Lucius Polk, I witnessed the splendid charge of the veterans of his brigade up the ridge held by Thomas. I never witnessed a more enthusiastic and intrepid charge, and it carried everything before it. What seemed to be a heavy skirmish-line behind logs was quickly destroyed and forced back on a front line of log breastworks, and such was the impetuosity of the attack that our men rushed up to and over these works, driving the troops there, in utter confusion, back on the main line. Here General L. E. Polk said to me: "Go back and tell the old general that we have passed two lines of breastworks; that we have got them on the jump, and I am sure of carrying the main line." At the top of my horse's speed I rode to where General

Leonidas Polk waited in a small glade, near Breckinridge's left. As I was seen approaching, Breckinridge, Cheatham, and other commanders present, drew up on horseback around General Polk, who, immediately on receiving my report, said to those officers: "Push your commands forward, gentlemen, and assault them vigorously along the whole line."

Away went generals and staff at full speed, and when the order to advance reached our troops, who were expecting it, the stirring Confederate yell arose and swelled to a full chorus along the whole line as our men rushed to the charge.

The following statement from Carnes agrees so perfectly with my own observation, that it is reproduced:

I have read accounts of this fight from the Federal side, and some from Confederate officers who were with our left wing, in which it was stated that Thomas withdrew his forces about dark. In our front they withdrew before the charge of our troops over the breastworks, and the quantity of small-arms and accoutrements scattered in all directions — limber-chests, caissons, and pieces of artillery abandoned where they had been jammed in between trees and saplings in rapid flight — bore conclusive testimony to the character of their withdrawal.

The fight upon the left wing had been renewed with increasing fury about 3.30. Stewart, who had met the fate of Cleburne in the morning assault, now held position along with Cleburne, the two forming the pivots upon which the wings of the Confederate army were turning toward each other. Longstreet, holding Preston in reserve, carried on the battle with Hood's corps and Hindman's division. Brannan, Wood, and Granger, aided by such regiments as Thomas could spare from his left, — his two wings being now almost back to back, — fought for every inch of ground. Although without field-works, their position upon the side of Missionary Ridge afforded a protection which was utilized to the

fullest extent. Hindman was repulsed, and Johnson, now commanding Hood's corps, shared a like fate. About five o'clock Preston was advanced to their relief, and the battle along that line was renewed; but the enemy still held their position successfully. It was soon to end, however. Polk's line, sweeping up over the State road, crushed the Federal left, and, catching its right in flank and rear, the resistance in front of Longstreet melted away, and with the fall of night disappeared. Never will the writer forget the "rebel yell" which proclaimed this triumph; for, rising higher and higher, and echoing and re-echoing from wing to wing, it told to friend and foe that victory that night rested with the Confederacy.

It probably never happened before that a great battle was fought to its bloody conclusion with the commanders of each side away from the field of conflict. But the Federals were in the hands of the indomitable Thomas, and the Confederates were under their two heroic wing-commanders.[1]

The immediate results were 8000 prisoners, 36 pieces of artillery, 15,000 stand of small-arms, 25 stand of colors and guidons, numbers of wagons and ambulances, and quantities of ammunition, hospital stores, etc.

General Polk established his headquarters in the enemy's works at the State road, and sent out scouts to ascertain the whereabouts of the enemy. The scouts returned and reported that there was no enemy in front.

He then sent Colonel Spence, of his staff, to General Bragg, to report the situation of the right wing, and to say that the enemy had been driven from every position in his front and was now in full retreat.

Colonel Spence made the report accordingly, and at

1 Lieutenant-General Hill, "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War."

the request of the commanding general General Polk went to army headquarters, which he reached some time after midnight. As to what occurred at this interview, we give the statement of Colonel W. D. Gale, General Polk's aide-de-camp:

> I have a most vivid recollection of what occurred so far as I had an opportunity to see and hear. About eleven or twelve at night, on the last day of the battle, I rode with General Polk from his bivouac among the dead and dying, in Thomas's entrenched line, to General Bragg's headquarters. General Bragg had gone to bed, but got up to listen to his report of the day's work of his forces. General Polk urged upon him the fact that the enemy was routed and flying precipitately from the field, and that then was the opportunity to finish the work by the capture or destruction of his army by prompt pursuit, before he had time to reorganize and throw up defenses at Chattanooga. General Bragg could not be induced to look at it in that light, and refused to believe that he had won a victory.

Rarely has there been a battle in which troops were so little mixed up, and in which organization was so little disturbed. Polk's wing was ready to march or fight at dawn in the morning, — with thinned ranks, it is true, but with buoyant and exultant spirits.

Similar statements are applicable to the left wing under Longstreet, who doubtless expected prompt orders to pursue, for in his official report he says:

> As it was almost dark, I ordered my line to remain as it was; ammunition-boxes to be refilled, stragglers to be collected, and everything in readincss for the pursuit in the morning.

After the interview with General Bragg, Polk returned to his quarters in the hope that he might receive orders, in common with the left wing, to push forward at dawn.

An order, at length, was sent; it was for Cheatham's division to reconnoiter ground already scouted over, and for details to gather spoils and bury the dead.

While General Polk was waiting on his line for further orders, he received the following note from Forrest in the front:

ON THE ROAD, 9 A.M., September 21, 1863.

General: We are in a mile of Rossville. Have been on the point of Missionary Ridge. Can see Chattanooga and everything around it. The enemy's trains are leaving, going around the point of Lookout Mountain. The prisoners captured report the pontoons thrown across for the purpose of retreating. I think they are evacuating as hard as they can go. They are cutting timber down to obstruct our passing. I think we ought to press forward as rapidly as possible.

(Please forward to General Bragg.)

Respectfully, etc.,

N. B. FORREST, *Brigadier-General.*

TO LIEUTENANT-GENERAL POLK.

The note was promptly forwarded to General Bragg, but the rare and high occasion, reached only by such generous and splendid sacrifice, was gradually sinking into the slough of lost opportunities.

From the battlefield General Polk wrote Mrs. Polk:

September 21, 1863.

I write a hurried line only to say that by the mercy of God I am unhurt in the operations of the last two days, and so are our son and son-in-law. The work has been very heavy, but we have driven them both days before us. We have fought all of Rosecrans' army, especially yesterday. We have just heard, at 9 A.M., that he has retreated to Chattanooga. We shall pursue. The Lord has been very gracious and merciful to us, and has blessed us; for which I feel, and hope we all feel, truly grateful. May His blessing still rest upon us.

On the afternoon of the 21st the order to advance was given; it was not, however, to Chattanooga, but to occupy the high ground of Missionary Ridge overlooking the town.

The commanding general now invested the town: the right wing, under Polk, resting on the Tennessee River above the town; the left, under Longstreet, resting on the river below the town, at Lookout Mountain.

Three days had now elapsed since Rosecrans entered Chattanooga with his fleeing and confused army. He was strongly intrenched, and, grateful for the breathing-time allowed to him, stood at bay.

It is difficult to understand the apathy shown by General Bragg upon the afternoon and evening of the closing day of the battle. He did not show himself upon General Polk's line after the repulse of the morning, and, beyond sending orders to attack, gave General Polk no indication that he was specially concerned with what was going on upon the right. An explanation may possibly be found in a letter from Longstreet to Hill, written in July, 1884.

It is my opinion that Bragg thought at 3 P.M. that the battle was lost, though he did not say so positively. I asked him at that time to reinforce me with a few troops that had not been so severely engaged as mine, and to allow me to go down the Dry Valley Road, so as to interpose behind Thomas and cut off his retreat to Chattanooga, at the same time pursuing the troops that I had beaten back from my front. His reply, as well as I can remember, was that he had no troops except my own that had any fight left in them, and that I should remain in the position in which I then was. After telling me this, he left me, saying: "General, if anything happens, communicate with me at Reed's Bridge." In reading Bragg's report, I was struck with his remark that the morning after the battle "he found the ever-vigilant General Liddell feeling his way to

find the enemy." Inasmuch as every one in his army was supposed to know on the night of the battle that we had won a complete victory, it seemed to me quite ludicrous that an officer should be commended for his vigilance the next morning in looking for the enemy in his immediate presence. I know that I was then laying a plan by which we might overhaul the enemy at Chattanooga or between that point and Nashville. It did not occur to me on the night of the 20th to send Bragg word of our complete success. I thought that the loud huzzas that spread over the field just at dark were a sufficient assurance and notice to any one within five miles of us.[1]

A week after the battle, General Polk wrote the following letter to his wife, in which he pays a fitting tribute to his ever-faithful friend and aide-de-camp, Lieutenant W. B. Richmond, who was killed in the battle of the 20th:

SUNDAY, ON THE TOP OF MISSIONARY RIDGE,
IN FRONT OF CHATTANOOGA, Sept. 27, 1863.

My beloved wife: This day a week ago we fought the battle of Chickamauga, and it was a great success. We should have made more out of it. The enclosed copies of letters will show why we have not. Still it was a great triumph of arms. I wrote you a note from the battlefield, which I hope you got. I said all of us were safe, but, soon after, we found poor Richmond's body, my dear and faithful and attached young friend. We lost sight of him during the day, and found his body next morning lying within sixty yards of my camp, near the enemy's breastworks. He was one of the purest young men I ever knew, and possessed in an eminent degree some of the highest of human qualifications. I mourn for him as for a child. He was shot through the head, and was killed dead from his saddle. I shall ever cherish his memory most fondly. I am now looking down from the top of Missionary Ridge into Chattanooga and into the enemy's camp. I do not think we will attack him, but will learn his plans. But we are very

[1] "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," vol. iii, p. 659.

tired of the delay. The troops are in fine spirits; our losses have been large, but not out of proportion to those of our adversary. He suffered very severely.

All my staff escaped injury except poor Richmond. Sayers, my Irish engineer, was captured. We shall make a forward movement in a few days, I think, without doubt, and we are quite confident as to the future.

We look to God for His blessing.

The forward movement, however, was never made. An investment was attempted, which was soon broken by the reinforcements sent forward to Rosecrans' relief. Thus ended the Chickamauga campaign.

The student of the military operations of the Civil War will find abundant material from which to draw valuable deductions; but in none of it will he find more useful lessons than can be discovered by the study of that which bears upon the problems presented in the campaigns and battles of this army. It is not within the province of this work to enter upon so extensive a subject, but it is a part of it to present facts which are involved therein.

There is no factor of war of more importance than the spirit of any army in the midst of battle; and nothing reveals this better than the percentage of its loss in killed and wounded. In honoring this army we now present a statement of this loss in the four battles which it fought in the seventeen months ending with the battle of Chickamauga. It is unfortunate that these tables have not been made to cover the cavalry of the army. The omission was compelled, however, because of the difficulty experienced in gathering adequate data. This is not essential to our purpose, however, as that is fully reached with the infantry and artillery, the tables covering both fully.

SHILOH.	Engaged in Battle.	Killed.	Wounded.	Missing.	Percentage of Killed and Wounded.
Polk's Corps	9,136	385	1,953	19	.27
Bragg's Corps ...	13,589	553	2,441	634	.25
Hardee's Corps ..	6,789	404	1,936	141	.34
Breckinridge's C.	6,439	386	1,682	165	.32
TOTAL	35,953	1,728	8,012	959	.29
PERRYVILLE.					
Hardee's Corps, Cheatham's Div'n	16,000	510	2,635	251	.20
TOTAL	16,000	510	2,635	251	.20
MURFREESBORO.					
Polk's Corps	14,118	621	3,662	135	.31
Hardee's Corps ..	14,069	495	3,056	583	.29
McCown's Div'n..	4,414	94	762	106	.21
Jackson's Brigade	874	41	262	—	.34
TOTAL	33,475	1,251	7,742	824	.29
CHICKAMAUGA.					
Polk, Right Wing	(19) 22,016 (20) 20,240	951	6,566	1,344	.32
Longstreet, Left Wing	(19) 21,611 (20) 22,879	1,061	6,433	740	.32
TOTAL[1]	(19) 43,027 (20) 43,119	2,012	12,999	2,084	.32

Recapitulating the percentage of loss in killed and wounded in these several battles, and stating it in numerical order, we have: Perryville, 20; Shiloh, 29; Mur-

[1] The percentage for Chickamauga is estimated upon the total force engaged in the battle; the loss sustained on the 19th was about neutralized by troops belonging to Longstreet's corps and Walker's division, which arrived during the night of the 19th.

freesboro, 29; Chickamauga, 32. This record of bravery and endurance is rendered more valuable by comparing it with that furnished by the Army of Northern Virginia in the greatest of its battles, Gettysburg.

General Lee fought the battle of Gettysburg with 62,000 men of all arms, and lost 2592 killed, 12,709 wounded, and 5150 missing, making a total of 20,451, with a percentage of loss in killed and wounded, exclusive of cavalry, of about 25. Estimated upon the same basis, the Federal loss at Shiloh was 27, at Gettysburg about 22, and at Chickamauga 26½.

Additional interest may now be given these statements of losses by placing them beside those presented by other armies in some of the decisive battles of the world. We are able to do this by producing the following extract from an address made by Lieutenant-General Wheeler before a joint gathering of Confederate veterans and the Army of the Cumberland, at Chattanooga, in 1881.

Waterloo was one of the most desperate and bloody fields chronicled in European history, and yet Wellington's casualties were less than 12 per cent., his losses being 2432 killed and 9528 wounded out of 90,000 men. At the great battle of Wagram, Napoleon lost but about 5 per cent. At Würzburg the French lost but 3½ per cent., and yet the army gave up the field and retreated to the Rhine. At Racour, Marshal Saxe lost but 2½ per cent. At Zurich Massena lost but 8 per cent. At Lagriz Frederick lost but 6½ per cent. At Malplaquet Marlborough lost but 10 per cent., and at Ramillies the same intrepid commander lost but 6 per cent. At Contras Henry of Navarre was reported as cut to pieces, yet his loss was less than 10 per cent. At Lodi Napoleon lost 1¼ per cent. At Valmi Frederick lost but 3 per cent., and at the great battles of Marengo and Austerlitz, sanguinary as they were, Napoleon lost an average of less than 14½ per cent. At Magenta and Solferino, in 1859, the average loss of both armies

was less than 9 per cent. At Königgrätz, in 1866, it was 6 per cent. At Wörth, Specheran, Mars la Tour, Gravelotte, and Sedan, in 1870, the average loss was 12 per cent. At Linden General Moreau lost but 4 per cent., and the Archduke John lost but 7 per cent. in killed and wounded.

Thirty-two per cent. of killed and wounded must, then, be accepted as an index of the spirit with which the Army of Tennessee performed the duty devolved upon it at Chickamauga. How far its commanding general met the duties which devolved upon him as its leader may be gathered from what has been said in this narrative, and from the letters we now present.

HEADQUARTERS, NEAR CHATTANOOGA,
September 26, 1863.

HON. J. A. SEDDON, *Secretary of War.*

Sir: May I take the liberty to advise you of our condition and our wants? On the 20th instant, after a very severe battle, we gained a complete and glorious victory — the most complete victory of the war, except, perhaps, the first Manassas. On the morning of the 21st, General Bragg asked my opinion as to our best course. I suggested at once to strike at Burnside, and, if he made his escape, to march upon Rosecrans' communications in rear of Nashville. He seemed to adopt the suggestion, and gave the order to march at four o'clock in the afternoon. The right wing of the army marched some 8 or 10 miles, my command following next day at daylight. I was halted at the crossing of the Chickamauga, and on the night of the 22d the army was ordered to march for Chattanooga, thus giving the enemy two days and a half to strengthen the fortifications here already prepared for him by ourselves. Here we have remained under instructions that the enemy shall not be assaulted. To express my convictions in a few words, our chief has done but one thing that he ought to have done since I joined his army, — that was to order the attack upon the 20th. All other things that he has done

he ought not to have done. I am convinced that nothing but the hand of God can save us or help us as long as we have our present commander.

Now to our wants. Can't you send us General Lee? The army in Virginia can operate defensively, while our operations here should be offensive—until we have recovered Tennessee, at all events. We need some such great mind as General Lee's (nothing more) to accomplish this. You will be surprised to learn that this army has neither organization nor mobility, and I have doubts if its commander can give it to them. In an ordinary war I could serve without complaint under any one whom the government might place in authority; but we have too much at stake in this to remain quiet under such distressing circumstances. Our most precious blood is now flowing in streams from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, and may yet be exhausted before we have succeeded. Then goes honor, treasure, and independence. When I came here I hoped to find our commander willing and anxious to do all things that would aid us in our great cause, and ready to receive what aid he could get from his subordinates. It seems that I was greatly mistaken. It seems that he cannot adopt and adhere to any plan or course, whether of his own or of some one else. I desire to impress upon your mind that there is no exaggeration in these statements,—on the contrary, I have failed to express my convictions to the fullest extent. All that I can add without making this letter exceedingly long is to pray you to help us, and speedily.

I remain, with the greatest respect, your most obedient servant,

J. LONGSTREET, *Lieutenant-General.*

HEADQUARTERS, POLK'S CORPS,
IN THE FIELD BEFORE CHATTANOOGA,
September 27, 1863.

GENERAL [R. E.] LEE,

Care of the Secretary of War, Richmond, Va.

My dear General: General Longstreet informs me he has written you on the subject of coming to our help in the West. Allow me to unite with him in an earnest appeal to you to

give us the benefit of your skill and judgment and experience at this most important crisis. We have gained a signal victory, under God's blessing, over our enemy, but I greatly fear we are about to lose the fruits of it for the want of the necessary capacity to reap them. I speak advisedly, and after a very familiar acquaintance with the mind and character of the officer commanding this army, when I say we must have a change before any permanent success can be had in this region. The eyes of all would look to you, could you come; Longstreet thinks you can without serious detriment to the interests of the Army of Virginia, leaving it in the hands of one of your well-trained lieutenants. If both armies were driven back to the Mississippi, and Tennessee, not to say Kentucky, freed, and we on Grant's line of communications and in connection with the Trans-Mississippi Army, we might, by moving south, make short work of the army of the latter.

May I not then, general, again beg you to give this matter your respectful and serious attention, and see whether, as a question of duty to our suffering command, it be not proper for you to come over and help us?

I have the honor to be, general, very truly yours,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General Commanding.*

CAMP RAPPAHANNOCK, October 26, 1863.

GENERAL L. POLK.

My dear General: I received your letter of the 27th ultimo the day I was about to make a move upon General Meade to prevent his further reinforcing General Rosecrans. I have been unable to reply before now. I have rejoiced exceedingly at your great victory, and heartily wished that the advantages gained could be pursued and confirmed. I am indebted, I know, entirely to your kind feelings for the proposition made to me. I wish I could be of any service in the West, but I do not feel that I could do much anywhere. In addition to other infirmities, I have been for more than a month a great sufferer from rheumatism in my back, so that I can hardly get about. I hope the President has been able to rectify all difficulties in your army, and that Rosecrans will at last be obliged to aban-

don his position. I trust that you are again with your command, and that a merciful God will continue His blessings to us and shield us from any danger. That He may have you and your brave army under His care is my earnest prayer.

I am, general, with great respect, your obedient servant,

R. E. LEE.

The answer which the government gave to these appeals is shown in a letter from General Bragg's chief-of-staff to General Joseph E. Johnston; and, as it also reveals a corroboration by the mass of General Bragg's general officers of the opinions concerning his incapacity which were disregarded, its essential parts are reproduced here.

MISSIONARY RIDGE, October 13, 1863.

GENERAL J. E. JOHNSTON, *Commanding, etc.*

My dear Joe: Mr. Davis arrived on Friday, and goes to-day — it is said by his staff — on a visit to you. He has decided to retain Bragg, though he must have been fully satisfied of his unpopularity, and the decided opposition of the mass of the generals.[1] I think Longstreet has done more injury to the general than all the others put together. You may understand how much influence with his troops a remark from a man of his standing would have, — to the effect that Bragg was not on the field, and Lee would have been. Pemberton consulted me about staying here in command of a corps. I told him that there was not a division in this army that would be willing to receive him; that I was sorry to be obliged to tell him so unpleasant a truth, but so it was. He told me Bragg wanted him to stay. I told him that Bragg ought to understand the temper of his army better than I did, but that we did not always agree upon the point. He goes away, however. I am in a strait. I think I ought to go, and at the same time I feel that, if I left now, I would be looked upon as

[1] Mr. Davis called together the leading officers of the army, and asked of them their opinion of General Bragg's capacity as commander. The opinions were adverse.

trying to add to the discontent. I am, — for the first time, I think, in my life, — after serious reflection, unable to make up my mind as to the right, though I do not presume to say the conclusion was always wise.

Hill will be relieved: who will take Polk's and his place is yet unknown. I would not be surprised if —— was promoted, and thus the discontent of the Army of Tennessee increased. . . .

Fairness now demands that the reader should be referred to General Bragg's official report[1] of the battle of Chickamauga. It will be seen that he in no way held himself chargeable for any of the errors committed in the campaign or the battle. Others were responsible, the chief delinquent being, as there expressed, General Polk. At a subsequent period General Bragg modified his views concerning Polk's responsibility, as will appear in an extract from a letter which will be presented later. But he gave prompt expression to his feeling after the battle, as we will now relate.

On September 22 General Polk received an official note from General Bragg, asking for reasons for the delay in the attack on the morning of the 20th. Engrossed with the movement upon Missionary Ridge and the establishing of his wing of the army in position before Chattanooga, he did not reply at once. So on the 25th a reminder was sent, asking for a speedy reply. On the 30th he sent the following letter:

HEADQUARTERS, POLK'S CORPS, ARMY OF TENNESSEE,
MISSIONARY RIDGE, September 28, 1863.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL GEORGE WILLIAM BRENT,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

Colonel: In reply to your communication I would respectfully submit to the commanding general the following state-

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxx, pt. ii, pp. 26–37.

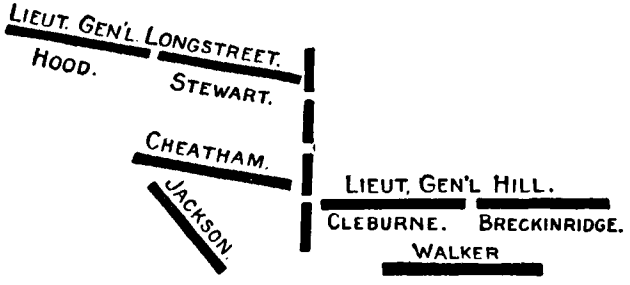
ment explanatory of the failure to make an attack upon the enemy as ordered at daylight on the 20th:

After leaving army headquarters on the night of the 19th, where I received a verbal order to attack the enemy at daylight, I rode immediately to my headquarters beyond Alexander's Bridge, where I arrived at 11 P.M. On the way, accompanied by General Breckinridge, I met with a staff-officer of Lieutenant-General Hill, to whom I communicated my orders, and from whom I learned that General Hill's headquarters were at Thedford's Ford. I asked him to say to General Hill that my headquarters were beyond and near to Alexander's Bridge, and that I desired to see him there. On arriving at my headquarters I issued orders, dated 11.30 [o'clock], to Lieutenant-General Hill and Major-General Cheatham, to attack the enemy simultaneously at daylight, General Walker's division being held in reserve. I also posted two couriers at the bridge to keep up fires and inform persons where my headquarters were. My orders were sent by couriers to the headquarters of the respective generals—General Hill's to Thedford's Ford. The couriers to Generals Cheatham and Walker returned promptly. The courier sent to General Hill, after searching for the general through the night, returned about daylight, saying that he could not find him. General Hill did not make his appearance at my headquarters. Hearing nothing of the attack, and not knowing where to find General Hill, I sent staff-officers in haste directly to Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne, with information that General Hill could not be found, and with orders to make the attack at once, and rode myself to the front. Shortly afterward I received, in reply to these orders, a communication from General Hill stating that his divisions were getting their rations and would not be ready to move for an hour or more, and also reporting that Breckinridge's wagons had been lost between Thedford's Ford and the battlefield. On reaching General Hill's line, I saw General Cleburne, of General Hill's corps, and asked if he had received my order to attack. He said he had received it in the presence of General Hill. I found also that General Hill had delayed his attack in consequence of a

misapprehension on his part as to the relation between his line and that of General Cheatham, he supposing that Cheatham's line was formed, as he said, on his left at nearly a right angle to his own. In this he was mistaken. The relation of the lines was such as is indicated in the accompanying diagram. General Hill mistook the line of one of Cheatham's reserve brigade (Jackson's) for that of his front line. The order to attack was then repeated and executed.

Respectfully, colonel, your obedient servant,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General Commanding.*



At the same time General Polk enclosed a copy of this letter to General Hill, and wrote him as follows:

HEADQUARTERS, MISSIONARY RIDGE,
September 30, 1863.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL D. H. HILL.

General: You will remember, in a conversation held with you some days ago, I handed you an order from army headquarters directing me to furnish an explanation of my failure to attack the enemy at daylight on the morning of the 20th. You will remember, also, that in that conversation I discussed with you the reasons which had caused that failure. Those reasons, as I understood them, I embodied in an answer to the above order, and transmitted them as my reply to the commanding general. A copy of that communication I think it proper to furnish you. You will find it herewith enclosed.

So far as I remember there was but one point of difference between us as to statements contained in that communication. That was as to the relation of your line to that of General Cheatham. There is one other point to which you called my attention, and on which it may be proper to remark: it is that in which I stated that on meeting your staff-officer in the road on the night of the 19th I communicated to him my orders. You replied: "If you communicated them to him, they were not communicated by him to me." On this point I have to say my recollection of the conversation with him was that I had orders to attack at daylight; that I wished you to post General Breckinridge as a supporting force to General Cleburne, and that I wished to see you at my headquarters beyond Alexander's Bridge, where I would have couriers posted to direct you. He said: "In regard to the posting of the troops you had expressed a wish to place Breckinridge on Cleburne's right." I replied: "Then tell General Hill he may post his troops as he pleases." In reply to my question where your headquarters would be, he said they would be at Thedford's Ford.

Referring you to my communication of yesterday's date, I remain, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

The reply which General Bragg made to Polk was an order suspending him from command and directing him to proceed to Atlanta.

On February 8, 1873, General Bragg wrote a letter to a friend,[1] in which he replied very fully to certain questions asked him concerning the campaign and battle of Chickamauga, and battle of Missionary Ridge. We have already quoted from this letter, in a footnote on page 251, and have referred to it as indicating a modification of General Bragg's conclusions expressed in his

[1] Letter to Major E. T. Sykes, of Columbus, Miss., in the Library of the Southern Historical Association, Richmond, Va.

official report concerning General Polk's responsibility for the delay of the 20th. We now present such parts of it, not already given, as relate to Polk, it being proper that they should be read in connection with the two letters just given.

It was nine o'clock before I got him (Polk) into position, and about ten before the attack was made,—*five precious hours*, in which our independence might have been won. As soon as time would allow, General Polk was called on for an explanation. The order given him the night before in the presence of several generals was plain, explicit, and emphatic, and before he left me he was asked if he fully understood the order, and replied in the affirmative. His explanation in writing was entirely unsatisfactory, as it placed the responsibility on a subordinate, Lieutenant-General Hill, when he (General Polk) was himself absent from the field, and had not even attempted to execute his orders nor informed me of their having been disobeyed. Breckinridge and Cheatham say in their reports [that] Polk told them during the night he had orders to attack at daybreak. I have the correspondence, but cannot now place my hands on it. . . .

As to General D. H. Hill's critical, captious, and dictatorial manner, etc. This manner of Hill's and his general deportment, united to the fact (which came to my knowledge after Polk's suspension from command) that Polk did order two of his division commanders in writing, soon after sunrise, to attack, and that Hill, being present in person, countermanded the order, without notifying either Polk or myself, induced me to ask his suspension from command, and he was removed by the President *before* the battle of Missionary Ridge. He had, however, greatly demoralized the troops he commanded, and sacrificed thousands at Chickamauga.

It was no secret at the time that General Polk's attitude in simply stating the facts of the delay for which he was suspended was a disappointment to the com-

manding general. It was expected that he would take some action against General Hill; but for obvious reasons he entertained no such intention, preferring to accept the issue as General Bragg made it, and leave it there. General Bragg was therefore obliged to act for himself, and this he did by relieving General Hill from his command, October 15.

As has already been said, General Polk was relieved from his command (September 29), and in accordance with instructions proceeded to Atlanta to await further orders.

The view which he took of General Bragg's action toward him, and the manner in which he bore himself, is shown in the following extracts from letters to his family.

ATLANTA, GA., October 3, 1863.

My dear Wife: You may be surprised to hear from me at this place. . . . It is a part of that long-cherished purpose to avenge himself on me for the relief and support I have given him in the past, and the jealousy which has been generated in the mind of the commanding general. He has attempted this, as you know, twice before, but has been foiled.[1] He will succeed no better in this instance. I think my way very clear before me, and I beg you to be assured that I am entirely quiet and undisturbed by this demonstration. There is but one opinion as to the injustice of the measure among my own corps, and, as I learn, among a large part of the army. General Hill said to me: "I take the blame of the omission to attack," and General Walker, who was also in my command, says it is ridiculous to suspend me for the omission of Hill. Buckner told me it was absurd and impotent; so that I hope, my dear, you will feel no solicitude on the subject. . . . The truth is,

[1] The first attempt was immediately before the Kentucky campaign. Bragg relieved Polk of his command and ordered him to duty at Jackson, Miss., as president of a court of inquiry. See also p. 94, chap. iv.

General Bragg has made a failure, notwithstanding the success of the battle, and he wants a scapegoat. But the flimsiness of the accusation is transparent to all.

ATLANTA, October 10, 1863.

My dear Daughter: . . . I hope that you will not be uneasy about my situation. I have done my duty, and I have no fears as to the result of any investigation or inquiry that may be instituted. I had no idea I had so many friends as I find springing up everywhere since the act of persecution has been attempted. The feeling in the army upon the subject is all I could desire; my brother officers feel as I desire they should.

The poor man who is the author of this trouble is, I am informed, as much to be pitied, or more, than the object of his ill-feeling. I certainly feel a lofty contempt for his puny effort to inflict injury upon a man who has dry-nursed him for the whole period of his connection with him, and has kept him from ruining the cause of the country by the sacrifice of its armies.

The President passed through here night before last. He stopped here during the night, and sent for me to come and see him. He said he had heard of General Bragg's action, which he thought a great blunder, which he deeply regretted, and he wanted to hear my version of the matter before seeing General Bragg. I gave it to him plainly and simply. He repeated that he thought it very unfortunate in every way for the country and the cause, and that he did not see the necessity for the action.

He has gone to the front, and told me that he would see me on his return.

I feel absolutely independent in the whole affair, and am perfectly satisfied with my ability to take care of myself.

I never was in better health, and am also, as my friends say, in marvelously fine spirits.

In compliance with the requirements of his action against General Polk, General Bragg preferred the nec-

essary charges, but the government dismissed them. The only reply, therefore, which General Polk had opportunity to make to this action is contained in the letter dated Atlanta, October 6, 1863, given in the Appendix to this chapter. He was never in position to prepare an official report of the campaign and battle of Chickamauga, because he could not get the reports of his subordinates,— all of them, excepting General Hill's, being sent direct to army headquarters. The letter announcing the dismissal both of the charges and of his application for a court of inquiry, is now given.

ATLANTA, October 29.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL POLK, *Atlanta, Ga.*

General: After an examination into the causes and circumstances attending your being relieved of your command with the army commanded by General Bragg, I have arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing attending them to justify a court-martial or a court of inquiry, and I therefore dismiss the application. Your assignment to a new field of duty alike important and difficult is the best evidence of my appreciation of your past services and expectations of your future career.

I am very truly and respectfully yours,

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

Before writing this note, Mr. Davis had offered to replace General Polk in his position with General Bragg's army, saying that Bragg would consent. But Polk thought every reason demanded that he should not return. In fact, he was tired holding a position in which for his own protection he was compelled not only to watch the common enemy, but be ever on the alert against the jealous hostility of his own commander,[1]

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xvi, pt. i, p. 1101. Polk to Hardee.

All of this he explained to Mr. Davis, who then sent him to replace General Hardee, at Enterprise, Miss., Hardee taking Polk's position in the Army of Tennessee.

As a part of the history of this period, it is necessary to refer again to the action of President Davis in the matter of retaining General Bragg in command of the Army of Tennessee. As has been seen in General Mackall's letter, it was plain that the general officers of the army preferred a change of commanders, few of them having confidence in General Bragg's ability to command an army. The question of a successor was evidently the one of greater perplexity to Mr. Davis. He therefore decided to face what he considered the lesser, and retained General Bragg in command, thus providing additional humiliation for this officer, in that his retention in command insured the disgrace and disaster of Missionary Ridge.

For let it be noted that this army, which two months before, at Chickamauga, had faced a loss in killed and wounded of nearly one man in every three, at Missionary Ridge practically abandoned its lines, to avoid being entrapped in a position from which it doubted the ability of its commander to extricate it,— the insignificant sum, in killed and wounded, of 2265 expressing the degree of its resistance on this field.[1]

No doubt, had General Bragg been left free by the President to follow his own inclination, he would have voluntarily surrendered the command before this disaster. As early as January of this year, at the time of his unfortunate correspondence with his generals after the battle of Murfreesboro, in anticipation of being superseded by General Kirby Smith, he had written

[1] The combined loss at the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge was 2443, killed and wounded. See General Bragg's papers.

General Johnston: "Whenever and wherever I am in the way of a better man, let me be put aside. I only ask to serve the cause where I can do it most good, even should it be in the ranks." His attitude toward the general government was well expressed in a letter to Mr. Davis of November 24, 1862, where he said, "The government may rest assured that whatever is subject to my control will be divided to the last pound in promotion of the whole cause."

This attitude, in marked contrast to that of some other generals, naturally commended him to the government, which, viewing its own relations with General Bragg, saw little more than insubordination in the request for a different commander. And it must also be said, that, in spite of General Bragg's conspicuous failure as commander of an army in the field, and his evident inability to accept and face the ill results of his own official acts, yet in all matters touching his private duty to the cause of the South he was unselfishness itself. No man loved it better, no man gave it more devoted service, none laid his all upon its altar more ungrudgingly, and no one would have laid down his life for it more cheerfully.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER VII.

ATLANTA, October 6, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS.

My dear Sir: I wrote you on the 27th ult., renewing the expression of my opinion of the incapacity of General Bragg for the responsible office of commander-in-chief of the Army of Tennessee, and asking that he should be replaced by General Lee or some other. It is proper to add that that letter was written after a meeting, by appointment, of Lieutenant-Generals Longstreet and Hill and myself, to consider what should be done in view of the palpable weakness and mismanagement manifested in the conduct of the military operations of this army.

It was agreed that I should address you, sir; and General Longstreet, the Secretary of War, on the other subject.

Three letters were written and forwarded, and, I need not add, after mature deliberation General Hill concurred in the necessity of the measure. As you may not have received these letters before leaving Richmond, I have deemed it proper to bring them to your notice.

Two days subsequent to my writing this letter to you, I received an order from General Bragg suspending me from my command and ordering me to this place. This order was based on alleged disobedience in not attacking the enemy at daylight on Sunday, the 20th. My explanation of that failure was furnished in a note, of which the accompanying is a copy. In this paper it will be perceived, first, that I directed a staff-officer of General Hill to say to the general I desired to see him at my headquarters, that he might receive his orders as to the operations of the following day; second, that the necessary orders were issued from my headquarters at

11.30 P.M. to General Hill and to Generals Cheatham and Walker, and dispatched by couriers. Cheatham and Walker received their orders. Hill could not be found by any courier, nor did Hill make his way to my headquarters.

These facts with others, you will observe, were embodied and presented to the commanding general in reply to a request for a written explanation of the failure. They were pronounced unsatisfactory, and the order for my suspension issued.

For the delay charged I cannot feel myself responsible, and it should be observed, by whomsoever caused, it did not occasion any failure in our success in the battle, for the enemy was clearly beaten at all points along my line and fairly driven from the field.

It will no doubt be affirmed that had the attack been made at daylight the enemy would have been overwhelmed, Chattanooga taken, etc., etc., and that all subsequent delays and miscarriages are to be set down to that account. To make this affirmation good it must be shown that at the close of the battle that night such a condition of things was developed as to make pursuit impossible, and that it was equally hopeless next morning.

This will not be pretended, inasmuch as the troops at the close of the fight were in the very highest spirits, ready for any service, and the moon, by whose guidance the enemy fled from the field, was as bright to guide us in pursuit as the enemy in flight. Besides, if the commander-in-chief, under a delusion he took no pains to dispel, thought the troops were fatigued, and chose to put off pursuit until the morning, why did he not attempt it then? Was it because he had made the discovery that the enemy had made his retreat into Chattanooga in good order, and there he was secure behind ample fortifications? Not at all, for he had no reason to believe that any material additions had been made to the work we had begun and left unfinished. And as to the order in which they entered into the town, General Forrest, who pressed them, in a dispatch from Missionary Ridge, dated between 8 and 9 A.M., Monday, and sent through me to the commanding gen-

eral, informed him that the approaches to Chattanooga were covered with troops, wagons, and herds of cattle in great confusion, and urged him to press forward, saying that every hour would be worth to him a thousand men.

No, sir! General Bragg did not know what had happened. He let down as usual, and allowed the fruits of the great but sanguinary victory to pass from him by the most criminal incapacity; for there are positions in which "weakness is wickedness."

By that victory, and its heavy expenditure of the life-blood of the Confederacy, we bought and paid for the whole of the State of Tennessee to the Mississippi River, at the very least; and all that was wanted was to have gone forward and taken possession of it. It was but a repetition of our old story in the battles of the West, and the army and the country feel that they have a right to ask for a thorough investigation of the cause of such repeated and grievous failures, that the responsibility may be fixed where it properly belongs.

As to my own case, my experience in this army has taught me to expect such a movement at any time for the last two years. I am not, therefore, taken by surprise. I have respectfully asked of the Secretary of War a court of inquiry at the earliest moment.

I remain, respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MERIDIAN CAMPAIGN.

NOVEMBER TO APRIL, 1864.

General Grant assumes command at Chattanooga.— Lookout Mountain, Missionary Ridge, and Knoxville.— Defeat of General Longstreet. —Retirement of General Bragg.— General Polk's new command.— General Johnston appointed to the Army of Tennessee.—Polk assigned to Johnston's old department.—His vigorous administration. —Effort to correct misunderstanding between Johnston and the President.—Grant's plans.— Sherman's movements.—Polk's plan.—Sooy Smith's advance and defeat.— Failure of the campaign— Sherman's report.—General Lee's comments.— Repair of railroads damaged.— General Polk's suggestions to the government for the spring campaign.— Cleburne's proposal to free and arm the negroes.— Mrs. Polk's reminiscences.

Events succeeded one another rapidly after General Polk's departure from the Army of Tennessee. The Federal army at Chattanooga had been placed under General Grant, the battles of Lookout Mountain and Missionary Ridge had been fought and lost by General Bragg, and General Longstreet, detached to operate against Burnside at Knoxville, had been defeated. He had retired in the direction of Virginia, while General Bragg, halting the remnant of his army at Dalton, relinquished the command.

It will be recalled that at the time Mr. Davis was investigating at Tullahoma the state of feeling existing in the Army of Tennessee toward General Bragg,— General Johnston being in temporary command,— Polk wrote the President a letter, urging him to make General

Johnston's appointment permanent. He there said that the highest interests of the Confederacy would be consulted by transferring Bragg to a higher field, "where his special talent — that of organization and discipline — could find a more ample scope." He suggested that he be assigned to the duties of inspector-general of the armies of the Confederacy, and continued:

"As his specialty is that which the office of inspector-general covers, his resources and capacity would be felt throughout the army; the whole family of idlers, drones, and shirks of high and low degree, far and near, would feel his searching hand, and be made to take their places and do their duty."

We do not pretend to say that this suggestion influenced the appointment which General Bragg subsequently received; but not long after he had of his own accord relinquished the command of his army, Mr. Davis assigned him to duty at Richmond, in a position somewhat analogous to that held by General Halleck in the Federal army.

The end of the Civil War was too near at hand for General Bragg to accomplish very much, but, judging from the benefits received by the Federal armies from General Halleck's administration, General Bragg's great abilities in the same direction would have accomplished quite as much for the Confederate armies, could he have undertaken the task at the same time.

General Polk reached Enterprise November 13, and entered upon his new duty of organizing the remnants of General Pemberton's army. While thus occupied he wrote the following letter to Mr. Davis, which, as will be seen, was for the purpose of securing for the Army of Tennessee the leadership which he had persistently sought from the close of the Kentucky campaign.

ENTERPRISE, December 8, 1863.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS.

My dear Sir: I perceive General Bragg has been relieved from the command of the Army of Tennessee; I perceive also, through the public press, that speculation is very busy as to who will probably succeed him. Rumor has it also that General Hardee has had the command offered to him, and that he has declined it. You will allow me, Mr. President, in the frankness of the intercourse which has characterized our long acquaintance, to say that, notwithstanding the difficulties you have in your own mind in regard to the man, and those that exist in mine, I think General Joe Johnston is the person to whom you should offer that command. As I have said this to you on several occasions before, both in writing and verbally, when my own position could not be affected by it in any wise, so I may repeat it now without the risk of seeming indelicacy. Indeed, it would not necessarily follow that General Johnston's appointment to the command of that or any other army would devolve the command he now holds on me, as the government might place this department, upon the relief of General Johnston, under any other officer as well as upon myself.

I am moved to make this suggestion to you again, sir, because I think I understand the feeling of the army better than one who had not served with it, and because I also understand the feeling of the country on the same subject. You will allow me then to say that I think, high as your duty to yourself and the responsibilities of your station are, yet where there is so general a desire on the part of the army and the country, as there is to have General Johnston placed in that command, a part of your duty seems to your friends to be to yield to this general desire, that those whose all is staked upon the issue may have something to say as to the hands in which it shall be saved or lost. I think your friends and history would justify you in this, and that magnanimity, perhaps, may require it at your hand.

I remain very truly your friend,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

About the middle of December the quiet at Enterprise was broken by a telegram from Richmond announcing that General Joseph E. Johnston had been assigned to the command of the Army of Tennessee, and that General Polk was assigned to the department of Alabama, Mississippi, and east Louisiana, made vacant by the assignment of General Johnston. Soon afterward, General Polk went to Brandon, to confer with General Johnston in relation to department matters, and to take charge of the command.

General Polk promptly applied himself to the task of acquiring a thorough knowledge of the department. Each day seemed to develop more and more the magnitude of the undertaking. The field assigned to him was not only of vast extent, but it was infested, in many neighborhoods, with spies, deserters, absentees without leave, and others liable to conscription. It had been stripped of provisions to a great degree, to supply the demand of the troops around Richmond, and the force at his command was wholly unequal to the task of defending the field entrusted to him. The vigor of his administration, however, was soon felt in the army and among the citizens. The deserters, absentees, and conscripts referred to were banded together in certain counties, in open defiance of authority. In many instances they had not hesitated to plunder commissary trains and army stores, after taking the lives of the guards protecting them. These had not only to be dealt with, but many of the men who had been paroled by General Grant upon the surrender of Vicksburg conscientiously believed they could not even be assembled in camp until exchanged, and had joined in resisting the government.

Under this state of affairs General Polk solicited and

obtained from the Department of War the permission to issue a proclamation of amnesty, conditioned upon the return of these various classes to their respective posts of duty within a limited time. The proclamation was sent to every county, and published in all the newspapers of the department. But acts of violence became even more frequent, and General Polk awaited, with impatience, the expiration of the time allowed by the proclamation, in order to take steps against them.

It was known in some quarters that a misunderstanding existed between President Davis and General Joseph E. Johnston, to which General Polk, in pursuance of his desire to bring these two together, and to establish that cordial coöperation which was so vital to the cause which they represented, doubtless alluded toward the close of his letter to the President given above.

The following letter was now written by General Polk to a prominent officer of General Johnston's staff. Its patriotic views and peacemaking character alike are worthy of him.

MERIDIAN, January 3.

COLONEL HARVIE.

My dear Sir: The pressure on my time has been so heavy since you left, I have not had an earlier opportunity to comply with your request to write you concerning the matter of which you spoke on the eve of your departure. I need not say I regard it of the highest consequence to the future success of our cause, that there should be a good understanding and a cordial feeling of confidence between the President and his generals commanding our armies. I believe it is generally known that, owing to some cause, such an understanding has not existed between the President and General Johnston: whether the fault has been that of the President or the general, I know not, nor is it material to inquire. It seems to me that at a time like this, when a cordial support should be given the generals by the President, it is desirable

that both parties should rise to a point that is high above all that is merely personal, and bury the past in a united and cordial devotion to the future. I think, too, that after the very general expression of desire on the part of the army and people that the general should be placed in command, and the satisfaction expressed at its consummation, he might well afford to take such a step as would bring about the state of feeling of which I spoke. It seems to me that the general might, without at all lowering the tone of a manly independence, address a letter to some friend, also a friend of the President, and I dare say there are many such in whose discretion and judgment he could confide, alluding to the fact that in the past, owing to whatever cause, it was known that a cordial feeling did not exist between the President and himself, and, without entering into details, say that for himself it was a subject of regret, and add that so far as he may have been at fault, if at all, in view of the public interest, he did regret it, and was prepared to waive all that was past in the desire to consult the public good. I have no doubt that such an overture would be received by the President in the best spirit, and that it would have the effect to ensure such an understanding as would be satisfactory to their friends and eminently conducive to the success of our military operations.

These are the views to which I alluded on the eve of your leaving me, and which I thought the friends of the general might with propriety submit for his consideration. The movement may involve, perhaps, some sacrifice of feeling; but for such a cause, and for such support as a good understanding between the parties named here will insure, I cannot but think the sacrifice might well be tendered as an instance of becoming magnanimity.

I remain, colonel, respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

This letter was the complement of the one written to Mr. Davis, and General Polk hoped that it might lead to a reconciliation, but history shows that its purpose was not fulfilled in the manner hoped for.

Early in December, finding the roads too bad for operations along the Tennessee line, General Grant turned his attention to that part of the field embraced in General Polk's command. He proposed to Mr. Lincoln that, fixing everything securely at Chattanooga and in East Tennessee, he should be permitted to organize a campaign against Mobile, to be conducted by Sherman or McPherson, for the purpose of securing Mobile as a base from which to move a column upon Montgomery and Atlanta, with a view to cutting off Mississippi and Alabama from the Confederacy, as he had already done the States lying west of the Mississippi River. After some correspondence, permission was granted, January 10, for the movement "either against Mobile or any other place south of our present lines that you may think it advisable to attack." It was conditioned, however, upon the security of Tennessee, which was to be provided for at Knoxville and Chattanooga by adequate provision against Longstreet and Johnston, and in West Tennessee by driving out the Confederate cavalry operating there under Lee and Forrest. Relying upon the natural obstacles which paralyzed his own action upon that line to retard his opponents, Grant determined to stand on the defensive at Knoxville and Chattanooga, and sent his chief of cavalry, General Sooy Smith, into West Tennessee, to accomplish the purpose of the instructions of his government there. General Sherman was then directed to gather from the garrisons along the Mississippi River a sufficient force, and make a movement from the river eastward. He had, of course, a large discretion, but what was expected of him is revealed in General Grant's letter to General Thomas, January 19, instructing him to coöperate with Sherman by a movement from Chattanooga upon General Johnston at Dalton.

He will proceed eastward as far as Meridian, at least, and will thoroughly destroy the roads east and south from there, and, if possible, will throw troops as far east as Selma; or, if he finds Mobile so far unguarded as to make his force sufficient for the enterprise, will go there. To coöperate with this movement, you want to keep up appearances of preparation of an advance from Chattanooga; it may be necessary, even, to move a column as far as Lafayette. The time for this advance, however, would not be before the 30th instant, or when you might learn the enemy were falling back. Logan will also be instructed to move at the same time what force he can from Bellefonte toward Rome. We will want to be ready at the earliest possible moment in the spring for a general advance. I look upon the line for this army to secure in its next campaign to be that from Chattanooga to Mobile, Atlanta and Montgomery being the important intermediate points. I look upon the Tennessee River and Mobile as being the most practicable points from which to start, and to hold as bases of supplies after the line is secured.

It was expected of Sherman that he would so effectually destroy the railroads south of Corinth and around Meridian that the Confederates would not attempt to rebuild them during the war, thus cutting off Mississippi as a source of supply, and materially aid in closing all that section — including West Tennessee — to the Confederates. How far the expectations of this campaign were realized will appear in this chapter.

On January 10, Sherman at Memphis wrote McPherson at Vicksburg to get ready for a movement upon Meridian and Selma; and on the 11th, Hurlburt, his other corps-commander, to whom Sherman had unfolded his plans, wrote his subordinate, A. J. Smith, to prepare for the service expected of them, which, to quote his own words, was as follows:

We have a heavy march before us, and the command must be fully prepared. It is the intention of General Sherman to move with the artillery and infantry, and such troops as he can get, from Vicksburg direct on Demopolis and Selma, the cavalry moving down the Mobile and Ohio railroad to meet us near Meridian, thus forcing the enemy to let go of their hold on Dalton, or endangering the loss of Selma, and perhaps Mobile. Close attention is therefore necessary to the fitting out of the individual soldier, and will be impressed upon field and line officers.

In permitting General Sherman to concentrate these troops at Vicksburg, the government had at first some idea of utilizing his command as part of an attempt upon the State of Texas, where, for political reasons, a lodgment was desired. General Banks at New Orleans, and General Steele in Arkansas, were then being prepared for this campaign, which was to be made along the line of Red River. But the water in the stream was too low for navigation at that time. Grant was therefore permitted to use Sherman for the furtherance of his designs upon Polk's department.

The force placed at Sherman's disposal was as follows: For his immediate command in the movement, the corps of McPherson and Hurlburt, which, with a small cavalry force (about 2000 men), gave him a column of 23,689 effective men, with 66 pieces of artillery. To coöperate with this force he organized a column of cavalry under Sooy Smith, numbering 6923 effective men, with 12 pieces of artillery. Smith was ordered to move forward and join Sherman at Meridian. That he might move as rapidly as possible, a well-appointed pack-train was furnished him. With this combined force of 30,000 men assembled at Meridian, General Sherman expected to be able to move forward and accomplish the ultimate objects of his campaign.

To aid the movement, Grant had directed Thomas to threaten Johnston at Dalton; and Logan, from the direction of Larkinsburg, was now instructed to threaten Rome and the valuable interests lying in north Alabama. Banks, who was preparing for his Red River expedition, consented, with the aid of Admiral Farragut, to make a demonstration against Mobile; and Sherman himself, in order to distract Polk's immediate attention, dispatched a small force—1000 men—with gunboats up the Yazoo River toward north Mississippi.

The nature and extent of these preparations had not escaped General Polk. On January 14 he dispatched the following to Mr. Davis:

MERIDIAN, January 14, 1864.

His Excellency, President Davis:

General Johnston says to me he has refused to you the restoration of the four brigades sent from this army to that of Tennessee. I think it plain that Grant cannot move before the spring opens, and therefore that Johnston will be unemployed. He can in that case well spare all four. It is now clear that an attack on Mobile is meditated. My department is large, and force small. I do not see how I can do without those brigades, and hope you will order them to report to Mobile. What is done ought to be done at once.

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

Polk made a hurried inspection of the western part of his department as far north as Grenada, and, returning, gave the defense of Mobile careful attention. Meanwhile, as the movements of Sherman and Smith took shape, he concentrated his forces. General Lee on the 19th was ordered to recall his brigades operating on the Mississippi River, and to hold his command well in hand. General Forrest, who was expected to operate against Smith's column, was called to Meridian that he might be fully informed as to the general situation.

General Maury, already on the alert at Mobile, was directed to hold his force ready for any service that might be required. French's division was advanced to Jackson, and with Loring's division was held ready for immediate movement. To still further shorten his line, Polk now withdrew Forrest to Grenada, leaving a part of his command to keep a close watch on Smith.

Touching Logan's movement upon north Alabama, he dispatched word to General Johnston that he must help him in that direction, and, if possible, spare him reinforcements to oppose Sherman. On the 26th he sent the following to the government:

I have dispatched you several times recently, in regard to movements of the enemy. I am now satisfied it is his intention to move on the western front of this department at an early day, and in heavy force. He will probably move from Vicksburg, Yazoo City, and perhaps Natchez, at the same time. A column is also concentrating at Grand Junction, in West Tennessee, *as a coöperating force.* The amount of force at my disposal is known to the department. The department is also informed of the reported intention of the enemy to move upon Mobile. These movements will probably be made upon different fronts at the same time.

On February 3 Sherman marched out of Vicksburg. Lee met him with three brigades of cavalry, but could make little impression, however, as Sherman placed his trains in the midst of his troops and moved in a compact mass. We can now best follow the campaign by giving extracts from the telegraphic reports made by Polk to his government:

MERIDIAN, February 6.

The movement in force of the enemy from the Mississippi at Vicksburg, which I dispatched you was contemplated, has been made. A column estimated at 20,000 entered Jackson

on the evening of the 5th. Another column (numbers not known) has moved up Yazoo River,—intended, probably, for Yazoo City. These columns were opposed by cavalry. I am concentrating my force of infantry at Morton. Whether the enemy intends to move in force across Pearl River does not yet appear.

February 9.

I have kept the War Department informed in regard to the movements of the enemy on the western front of this department. He moved out in heavy force from Vicksburg toward Jackson, also in boats up the Yazoo River. Both columns were met and held in check by the cavalry until developed.

He entered Jackson at 6 P.M., Friday, 5th, and, from the most reliable information, with a force of from 35,000 to 40,000 infantry, 60 pieces of artillery, and cavalry not known.

He crossed Pearl River at 10 A.M. on the 7th with his whole force, and moved rapidly upon Morton, destroying all the bridges behind him. He reached Morton last night, and turned toward Mobile to-day. My infantry force in this part of the department consists of Major-General Loring's division, about 6000, and French's, 1250, with 1700 exchanged prisoners imperfectly organized,—say 9000. The rest of the infantry composed the garrison of Mobile. A portion of this, on consultation with General Maury, was withdrawn and ordered to the front in the hope of making a campaign before it should be needed at Mobile. But the enemy's force proving so much larger than was anticipated, and other indications pointing to a combined attack on Mobile, made it necessary to restore this garrison and avoid giving battle, which, under other circumstances, might have been hazarded. I have therefore ordered the force from Mobile back to that garrison, and added other forces to it, so as to strengthen it up to the point deemed necessary by General Maury. These troops, I have no reason to doubt, will reach their destination in due time. I have just returned from an inspection of the defenses of Mobile, and although not completed, are yet in fine condition and very efficient. The garrison has six months' supply of subsistence and is very confident. I shall

take immediate steps to increase its stores by the rivers. It is of the highest consequence that its requisitions for ammunition for heavy guns should be supplied at once. I have General Loring's force and the cavalry still in the field, and am not without a prospect of increasing both.

The two brigades drawn from Mobile brought General Polk's force up to 14,000 men of all arms. Lee's cavalry command numbered but 2500, owing to the absence of Chalmers's division, Ross's brigade, and a part of Ferguson's. These, excepting Ross, were operating with Forrest. Ross was left to watch the Yazoo column, and did not join Lee until after Sherman had reached Meridian. The movement toward Mobile which this dispatch reported, proved, upon closer investigation, to be a feint; but this fact exerted little influence upon General Polk's plans, as he had already concluded not to fight Sherman's column with the force in hand. He was convinced, as his letters show, that the forces set in motion about his department were intended for something more than the superficial tearing up of a few miles of railroad, but, on the contrary, meant a movement upon Mobile or Selma, which latter view, as we have seen, was in accordance with General Sherman's instructions and intentions.

Finding that he was not strong enough to fight the main column successfully, General Polk now shaped his course so that he might concentrate upon the smaller cöoperating column (Sooy Smith's); for, in the absence of the aid which he had asked from General Johnston and the government, this was the only course open to him by which he could hope to break up General Sherman's campaign.

The country as far as Meridian, and even for some distance beyond, was comparatively barren and unim-

portant in a military sense. No great injury could, therefore, result from the march of the enemy through it. It was necessary, however, to delay him long enough to permit the removal of all stores from Meridian and the points above, and also to allow the rolling-stock of the railroads to be placed in safety. General Polk therefore determined to keep his force in Sherman's front long enough to accomplish these ends, and then, moving rapidly, place his infantry and artillery behind the Tombigbee River, and thus free all his cavalry for operations against Sooy Smith's. Concentrating his attention upon these objects, Polk pressed their execution with characteristic energy. Under cover of a feint toward Grenada, General Sooy Smith now began his march for Meridian. Concerning this movement, Polk dispatched the government as follows:

NEWTON, MISS., *via* MOBILE, February 10.

I dispatched the President yesterday as to the situation. Since then a dispatch from General Forrest announces two columns of cavalry—one to move on them at Grenada, the other on the corn region in the neighborhood of Columbus.

No better account of the progress and defeat of Sherman's campaign can possibly be given than was furnished by General Polk in the dispatches he continued to send to his government. We therefore reproduce them entire:

February 17.

The enemy entered Meridian the 14th, the day after my last dispatch. His forward movement was retarded by my cavalry, who assailed him in front and flank. His movement was so compact as to make it difficult to do more than annoy him.

Since he has been in Meridian he has been breaking up the Mobile and Ohio and the Meridian and Demopolis railroads. I am informed by General Lee he has moved also on Enter-

prise. What his intentions are has not yet been determined. He may still go to Mobile or return to Jackson. Ordered Lee and Forrest to harass him and to intercept a column of cavalry coming down to join him from West Tennessee, reported 10,000 strong. Am holding my small force in hand at Demopolis to take advantage of events. All stores from the Mobile and Ohio railroad of special value removed, and rolling-stock placed beyond his reach. Am increasing stores of garrison at Mobile.

DEMOPOLIS, February 18.

By my orders, General Forrest left a force to hold enemy in check near Memphis some days ago, and is now moving rapidly with his column to strike that of the enemy on its way to Columbus from West Tennessee. The column is one of cavalry, reported 10,000 strong, and is moving to join Sherman and secure food for his infantry at Meridian. The head of this column is reported near Pontotoc; General Forrest close by. General Lee moved forward under orders yesterday to coöperate with Forrest in an attack upon it [Smith's column]. A command under General Ruggles and the Mississippi State troops will unite in the attack. To crush that force is important.

February 20.

No movement of the enemy in any direction from Meridian up to the present, probably awaiting the arrival of his cavalry column coming down from West Tennessee. That column reported to-night as arrived at Aberdeen. Generals Lee and Forrest's columns ordered to unite and attack it. They are both between it and Sherman at Meridian, and in supporting distance. Head of my reinforcing column reported at Montgomery.

February 21.

Head of Hardee's column arriving to-day. Shall throw head of mine across the Tombigbee to-morrow, push the whole force forward as fast as it arrives, and move upon the enemy.

DEMOPOLIS, February 22.

The success of my cavalry in preventing a junction of the enemy's two columns appears to have broken up his campaign.

The following dispatch just received:

LAUDERDALE, February 22, 1864. 3 P.M.

General Polk:

The latest reliable information is that the enemy left the Mobile and Ohio railroad in two columns; one from Meridian going to Decatur, and the other from this place going to Herbert to meet at Union, and go thence to Carthage and to Canton.

R. O. PERRIN, *Colonel Commanding.*

At last advices General Forrest had the enemy's column of cavalry between the Chuckatouchee and the Tombigbee, and was holding it there for the arrival of General Lee. The latter would join him with his column perhaps to-day. I confidently expect a satisfactory result. I move my infantry forward in the morning. Two of General Hardee's brigades have arrived.

DEMOPOLIS, February 23.

The following dispatches just received:

LAUDERDALE STATION, 22d.

Scouts from Daleville report the enemy have all left the Mobile and Ohio railroad. Column from Marion marched three miles west of Daleville. The column from Meridian is moving west to form junction with column from Marion at Union, which is thirty miles west of Daleville; thence by way of Carthage to Canton. It is thought a small force has been sent by way of De Kalb to burn government corn at that place.

R. O. PERRIN, *Colonel Commanding.*

LINE CREEK, NINE MILES SOUTHWEST OF WEST POINT,
February 22, 1864. 10 A.M.

Arrived here at daylight. Enemy are retiring rapidly. General Forrest is pursuing, and at last report is sixteen miles above West Point. He does not know yet whether they are trying to join Sherman *via* Houston and Greensborough, or not. Have halted my command till I hear further from him. It is in position to intercept raiders, unless they are off for Memphis, which I think is the case. Their force was overrated, I think.

S. D. LEE, *Major-General.*[1]

From the above and other dispatches, all of the same tenor, preceding these, I think it now certain that the campaign of the enemy is broken up. He must go beyond Pearl River,

[1] "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxxii, pt. i, pp. 334, 345.

and I shall pursue him with my cavalry and follow with infantry, reëstablishing my former lines as early as practicable. Is it your wish that General Hardee's column be employed in operations farther west?

I shall send General Forrest without delay into the western district to break up the Federal elections proposed to be held there within the next ten days, and to bring out other troops, horses, etc., from there and southern Kentucky.

DEMOPOLIS, February 22.

I have already taken measures to have all the roads broken up by him [Sherman] rebuilt, and shall press that work vigorously. The amount of road destroyed by him [Sherman] may be in all about fifty miles, extending out on the four roads from Meridian as a center.

To continue this story, we give an extract from the official report made by General Sherman after his campaign.

My plan of action was as follows: General William Sooy Smith to move from Memphis by or before the 1st of February with an effective force of 7000 cavalry lightly equipped, to march straight on Pontotoc, Okolona, Artesia, and Meridian, to arrive there about February 10, distance 250 miles, . . . while I, with four divisions of infantry and artillery, would at the same time move from Vicksburg on the same objective point, 150 miles distant. When met at Meridian, being present in person, I could then order anew, according to the then circumstances, condition of road, and time left at my disposal.

In providing for the contingencies of the campaign, General Polk had designated West Point as the place at which Forrest should endeavor to concentrate in case Smith moved as he did finally. The selection of West Point was due to the fact that it was upon the outer limit of the grain country, which it was desired to protect. It was upon the Mobile and Ohio railroad, and was

the starting-point for the line of couriers which had been established between the telegraph line and Forrest's headquarters at Oxford; but, above all, it was in the direction of a concentration of all the forces upon the interior lines he had selected.

Referring now to that part of Smith's official report which deals with the causes of his retreat, we find that he says:

> Exaggerated reports of Forrest's strength reached me constantly, and it was reported that Lee was about to reinforce him with a portion or the whole of his command. Columbus had been evacuated, and all the State troops that could be assembled from every quarter were drawn together in my front. (West Point.)

Under all these circumstances, Smith, as he says, determined not to move into the trap which Polk had set for him. He therefore halted at West Point, and on the 22d began his retreat. Forrest, whose available force numbered about 3000, attacked him at once, and kept up a persistent fight nearly as far as Memphis, to which place General Smith proceeded without any unnecessary delay.

General Lee, who had an intimate knowledge of General Polk's plans, says in the "Southern Historical Society Papers" (vol. viii, No. 2, p. 58):

> Lieutenant-General Polk, in the exercise of a wise discretion, determined from the first not to fight Sherman if his army was as large as represented; for he felt that he was too weak to inflict a telling blow unless he was considerably reinforced. He determined to let Sherman expend himself in the piney woods, unless he moved to the Tombigbee River toward Selma or toward Mobile, in which case he expected to receive assistance from Johnston's army in Georgia, and to crush Sherman. The movement of troops for this purpose (Hardee's corps) was at the time in progress.

General Polk's orders to Lee, operating against Sherman, plainly showed he did not want Sherman materially interfered with, but rather encouraged to move as far as he would. It is true, Sherman's march was skillfully conducted, and he gave Lee but little opportunity to hurt him. In fact, Lee could only keep in his foragers and stragglers, and aid him in keeping compact while in motion.

General Polk, in carrying out his plan, at once seized the opportunity offered by W. S. Smith's cavalry expedition against Forrest, to order Lee's entire cavalry force to leave Sherman in his loneliness, and to unite with Forrest and beat Smith before he could reach Meridian, while he [Polk] was at the same moment arranging a similar concentration for Sherman's benefit, as soon as Smith was discomfited. Both Sherman and Smith displayed sagacity on this occasion. Smith, in his candor, says he retreated to avoid falling "into the trap set for me by the rebels," while Sherman, to cover his discomfiture, protests in his book that he *never had any idea of either Mobile or Selma.*

This protest of General Sherman's is met fully enough in his instructions; but if further evidences of his discomfiture were needed, it would be found in his abuse of General Sooy Smith for not reaching Meridian. Smith was not necessary to Sherman's work at Meridian, but was essential to the completion of the campaign as originally mapped out.

In his "Memoirs" General Sherman says: "I was determined to damage the roads so that they could not be used again for hostile purposes during the rest of the war." How far he succeeded in this work may be gathered from the record, which shows that by the 10th of May all telegraph lines and railways injured by him had been so thoroughly repaired that they were in better condition than before his raid.

In addition to this, the road from Meridian had been

extended to Jackson, the Mobile and Ohio railroad had been repaired as far north as Corinth, and that place, after being in the hands of the enemy since General Beauregard surrendered it in June, 1862, was now presented to General Forrest as a base for further operations in west Tennessee.[1]

Work upon the New Orleans and Jackson and Mississippi Central railroads was also pushed to completion, with the view of giving an unbroken line of rail from Lake Pontchartrain to Grenada and beyond; railroad communication between these points having been severed since General Sherman's visit in July, 1863. This work was completed on the 15th of May, 1864, and this road was used as a base for the operations upon the Mississippi River, which General Polk now instituted along this entire front for the purpose of impeding its navigation.

It is needless to say that the result of the campaign was gratifying to General Polk, and he had the additional satisfaction of receiving the commendation of his government. But the greatest satisfaction was derived from the reports which came to him of the confidence and approval of his subordinates. General George B. Hodge, who made an inspection of the department for the government, writing General Polk upon returning to Richmond, said: "I was greatly pleased to hear the cordial terms in which your subordinates indorsed your campaign."

But the campaign had fallen short of General Polk's wishes and intentions. Having warned the authorities in ample time of the extent and purpose of the enemy's movements, he had a right to expect that an effort would be made to send him proper reinforcements in time to

1 "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxxix, pt. ii, p. 565.

permit such an attack upon Sherman as would have made his return to Vicksburg doubtful, if not impossible. General Polk was confident that he had force enough to prevent the juncture of Sherman's columns, and counted upon this to check him, but he looked beyond this to the hope of inflicting such a stunning blow to both columns as would prevent their employment in any other quarter for some time to come. General Polk believed at the time, and on February 28 said, that the main column would reappear in Johnston's front at Dalton. This it did promptly, and under General McPherson it operated, and continued to operate, throughout the Atlanta campaign, as one of the most efficient corps of General Sherman's army.

As will be seen by referring to General Polk's dispatch of February 21, General Hardee, with Cleburne's and Cheatham's divisions, was sent from General Johnston's army at Dalton, the head of the column coming by rail, reaching Demopolis that day. Polk had already recrossed the river with his own troops, and only awaited Hardee's arrival to advance the whole force upon Sherman the following day, the 22d; but Sherman began his retreat from Meridian the morning of the 22d, and consequently was too far distant to be intercepted. Hardee was therefore returned to Dalton. It appears from correspondence in the hands of the writer that Hardee would have arrived at Demopolis on February 15, had the orders of the government been carried out. The President directed that the reinforcements be sent from Dalton, and, in view of General Johnston's apprehension for the safety of his position, arranged to replace the loss by troops from Charleston. General Johnston was not properly informed of the government's action to replace Hardee, and being misled by Thomas's action, who in

accordance with Grant's instructions made the feint upon Dalton, delayed Hardee's departure a week later than the time specified.

Had General Polk advanced upon Sherman on February 16 with all the forces at his disposal on the 22d, it is not saying too much to affirm that the Atlanta campaign would have received an introductory battle near Meridian which would have materially strengthened General Johnston in the task subsequently presented him from Dalton to Atlanta. Reverting to the campaign as actually completed by General Polk, his dispositions show that the only thing which prevented the accomplishment of his purpose toward Smith's column was the judicious action of that officer in eluding the combination of Lee's and Forrest's forces prepared for him. General Polk counted confidently upon catching Smith between these two, and his hasty retreat alone saved him.

Turning his attention now to other opportunities for aggression, General Polk next made the following suggestions to the government. The wisdom of the proposal was subsequently appreciated, but it was then, as with so many other movements in this war, too late for it to be of service.

DEMOPOLIS, ALA., February 28, 1864.

Sherman's campaign being over,—which from the Yankee accounts it seemed was intended to be a precursor of that of Grant from Chattanooga,—the mind turns naturally to the latter. In reflecting on the posture of affairs, there are certain views upon which my mind has settled in regard to the spring campaign, which I beg leave respectfully to submit for your consideration.

The point from which the most important movement is to be made in the spring is Chattanooga. The amount of force confronting it under General Johnston is not believed to be

adequate to resist it successfully. The remoteness of Chattanooga from the enemy's base exposes his flanks through long lines; that in front of me not less than six hundred miles from Chattanooga to the Mississippi River. I respectfully suggest that the infantry force under my command be increased by the addition from General Johnston's army of one division, and I strongly desire that the division sent me be my old division of Tennesseeans, now commanded by Major-General Cheatham. This division consists of about 4000 effectives. The material composing it was raised by me chiefly in the western district of Tennessee; a few regiments from Middle Tennessee. If this division were ordered to report to me at once I would send it up to the border of the district, or into it, and I am confident that I could increase its strength to double its present numbers by recovering a large number of men who during the last three years have left it and gone back to the district, and others who have never been in the service. The addition of this force to my present command, and the additions I shall receive from Mississippi and Alabama to that command, will give me a column of 15,000 infantry. To that I am confident of adding a command of 15,000 cavalry, which would give me a united column of 30,000 with which to operate on Grant's right flank in the spring. To enable me to do this it would be necessary to order General Kirby Smith to operate with all the troops at his command vigorously upon Banks's whole line, and upon any point in Sherman's department west of the Mississippi at which he might leave forces. These demonstrations, together with the garrison at Mobile, thought to be adequate to take care of itself, and detachments of cavalry along the Mississippi River front, would be all that would be required to protect my department pending the campaign. It is not doubted that General Grant will recall Sherman's army, which must constitute a large part of the force with which he must operate from Chattanooga. It is his old and tried army, and he would and must have it with him if he proposed a heavy movement. My plan would be to throw myself across the Tennessee River by the use of pontoon trains, which I can easily get up, and assail his flank and rear. If,

at the same time, General Longstreet were ordered, with the forces under General Breckinridge, to constitute a column and throw himself across the mountains on his left flank, with Morgan's cavalry to aid him, and with as many of Johnston's as he could spare, I should feel quite confident of being able to break up Grant's expedition effectually, if not shatter his army. Should we be successful, we might take the offensive and invade his territory.

HIS EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT DAVIS, *Richmond.*

In connection with this letter, the following extract from General Sherman's "Memoirs" is of special interest: "The Atlanta campaign would simply have been impossible without the use of the railroads — from Louisville to Nashville, 185 miles; from Nashville to Chattanooga, 151 miles; Chattanooga to Atlanta, 137 miles; every mile single-tracked and marked by several tunnels, one quite long."[1]

Finding that the government did not sanction the plan, General Polk devoted himself to strengthening Forrest, so that every possible damage might be inflicted upon the enemy in West Tennessee, and provision made for gathering into this command the material he had hoped to throw into Cheatham's division, the remnant of his first command.

In view of the active operations upon the Tennessee front, foreshadowed in the above letter, Polk was assiduous in having the command under him armed and equipped as thoroughly as practicable. He secured for his artillery new guns of approved patterns, and, as the country around had become exhausted by previous drafts, citizens were solicited and cheerfully gave up their carriage horses for the use of the army, until the supply filled all present need. Infantry were supplied

[1] Vol. ii, p. 398.

with clothing; commissary stores collected and housed; small-arms repaired or replaced by new; daily drills were ordered and enforced.

The deserters, absentees without leave, and fugitive conscripts enjoyed a respite during Sherman's raid. The delay allowed them in which to return had passed. They remained hostile and defiant. General Polk now sent expeditions to the disaffected districts, which succeeded in subduing all lawlessness and in restoring to the army large numbers of absentees.

General Polk, writing to a member of his family on June 11, said of this work:

> The results following upon the measures of my administration of the Department of Mississippi, in arousing the public mind and getting up and stirring out the men who had deserted from their commands, have been in the highest degree gratifying. It is believed that those measures have put into the field at least 5000 men who were lost to the Confederacy; and, besides this, the effect has been admirable in relieving the country districts of that number of discontents on the one hand, and raising its spirit by that much relief on the other. Those people have rested upon the heart of the home population like an incubus, and it feels a great relief at its removal. It also feels that the power of the Confederacy is not dead, but is not only living, but moving. The moral effect upon the whole department has been excellent, and it has more life and spirit than at any time since the early periods of the war.

We now present a very interesting letter from General Patton Anderson, commanding a division in the Army of Tennessee, and one of its best and most influential officers, of whom it need only be said that he fully deserved the many tributes paid him in the reports of all his commanders. This letter deals with the question of the enlistment of negroes as soldiers, and suggests a feeling against such action on the part of the south-

ern soldiers which it is at first difficult to understand. The difficulty is removed, however, when it is realized that the most bitter opponents of negro enfranchisement and negro equality were the rank and file of the southern army. They were not, as a rule, the men who owned slaves, but they represented the class upon whose heels the enfranchised negro would inevitably tread; and the query which would naturally suggest itself to them in this connection was, Why should they continue to face the danger and endure the hardships of war longer, if by so doing they only gained a success which placed them no better than they could now be by simply throwing down their arms and going to their homes — to families that in many instances were already reduced to dire want because of their absence?

General Anderson's own attitude toward the proposition was undoubtedly that of a large number of southern men of the class to which he and General Polk belonged. These men entered upon the Civil War far less with a desire for separate government than for the right to manage their own affairs; and while their individual preference undoubtedly favored ultimate freedom of the negro, they regarded this step as one belonging exclusively to themselves, and one in which they should be free to act without outside dictation or interference. The commercial aspect of emancipation was to them the least element in the problem of slavery. That it was a curse to blacks and whites alike they saw only too plainly, but they did not believe it would be mitigated for either by suddenly and violently altering the relation of the two races. On the contrary, they felt that any such action would only add to the curse, as it inevitably would lead to race antagonism, which, hanging like a pall over the country, could but end in disaster to the weaker.

Putting aside, then, every other objection to the project, the fact that its adoption would take the very core out of the principle upon which men like Anderson stood in their opposition to the Federal Union was enough to cause them to antagonize it. General Cleburne, a foreigner by birth and education, naturally viewed the proposition from a wholly different standpoint. An old soldier and a very able one, it was to him merely a question of the adaptation of the means at hand to the end to be attained, and from this standpoint the suggestion was correct in principle; but in application, in this instance, it would have failed, for the simple reason that the negro would not have supported it.

Anderson's prediction was evidently brought home to the authorities, because, in spite of the widespread agitation of the subject, the employment of negroes other than as teamsters and builders of fortifications was never attempted.

The letter reached General Polk just as he was in the midst of the preparations to meet the advance of General Sherman; his answer was consequently postponed. Unfortunately, no record of it has been found. The tribute to General Polk is especially valuable, coming as it does from one who had served under him for two years, and who occupied so prominent a position in the army with which he had so long been associated.

DALTON, GA., January 14, 1864.

(*Confidential.*)

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL L. POLK, *Enterprise, Miss.*

General: After you have read what I am about to disclose to you, I hope you will not think I have assumed any unwarrantable intimacy in writing this communication as "confidential."

My thoughts for ten days past have been so oppressed with the might of the subject as to arouse in my mind the most

painful apprehensions of future results, and have caused me to cast about for a friend of clear head, ripe judgment, and pure patriotism with whom to confer and take counsel.

My choice has fallen upon you, sir, and I proceed at once to lay the matter before you.

On the 2d of January I received a circular order from the headquarters Hindman's corps, informing me that the commanding general of the army desired division commanders to meet him at his quarters at seven o'clock that evening.

At the hour designated I was at the appointed place. I met in the room General Johnston, Lieutenant-General Hardee, Major-Generals Walker, Stewart, and Stevenson, and in a moment afterward Major-Generals Hindman and Cleburne entered, Brigadier-General Bate coming in a few minutes later,—the whole, with the general commanding, embracing all the corps and division commanders (infantry) of this army, except Major-General Cheatham, who was not present. In a few minutes General Johnston requested Lieutenant-General Hardee to explain the object of the meeting, which he did by stating that Major-General Cleburne had prepared with great care a paper on an important subject, addressed to the officers of this army, and he proposed that it now be read.

General Cleburne proceeded to read an elaborate article on the subject of our past disasters, present condition, and inevitable future ruin unless an entire change of policy might avert it. That change he boldly and proudly proposed to effect by *emancipating our slaves and putting muskets in the hands of all of them capable of bearing arms,* thus securing them to us as *allies* and equals, and ensuring a superiority of numbers over our enemies, etc.

Yes, sir, this plain — but in my view monstrous — proposition was calmly submitted to the generals of *this* army for their sanction and adoption, with the avowed purpose of carrying it to the rank and file.

I will not attempt to describe my feelings on being confronted with a project so startling in its character,—may I say so revolting to southern sentiment, southern pride, and southern honor? And not the least painful of the emotions

awakened by it was the consciousness which forced itself upon me, that it met with favor by others beside the author in high station then present.

You have a place, general, in the southern heart perhaps not less exalted than that you occupy in her army. No one knows better than yourself all the hidden powers and secret springs which move the great moral machinery of the South. You know whence she derived that force which three years ago impelled her to the separation, and has since that time, to this present hour, enabled her to lay all she has, even the blood of her best sons, upon the altar of Independence, and do *you* believe that *that* South will now listen to the voices of those who would ask her to stultify herself by entertaining a proposition which heretofore our insolent foes themselves had not even dared to make in terms so bold and undisguised?

What are we to do? If this thing is once openly proposed to the army, the total disintegration of that army will follow in a fortnight, and yet to speak and work in opposition to it is an agitation of the question scarcely less to be dreaded at this time, and brings down the universal indignation of the southern people and the southern soldiers upon the head of at least one of our bravest and most accomplished officers. Then, I repeat, what is to be done?

What relief it would afford me to *talk* to you about this matter! — but, as that may not be, do I go too far in asking you to write to me?

I start in a few days for my home in Monticello, Fla., where I expect to spend twenty days with my family, and I assure you, general, it would add much to the enjoyment of my visit if you would favor me by mail with some of the many thoughts which this subject will arouse in your mind.

Believe me, general, very truly your friend,

PATTON ANDERSON.

As it is the purpose of this narrative to show not only how Leonidas Polk performed the duties of his several positions, but to reveal his personality under

the varying conditions of his life, we present here the closing of the narrative prepared by Mrs. Polk for her children in the last year of the Civil War. As will be seen, it ends amid the scenes of which this chapter treats.

On the 7th of November we left Atlanta, spent Sunday in Montgomery at General Withers's, and went to Mobile the next day. Here the general was detained a few days, but on Friday, the 13th, we went to Enterprise and took possession of a room kindly offered us by General O'Ferral.

Those were happy days passed in the log room, sixteen feet square, lighted by one window, and I enjoyed them more than I can tell. Soon after his arrival he went up to report to General Johnston, and took a severe cold in consequence of being in an overheated car. On his return he was confined to his bed for several days. I never can think of those days without tears. He would often say, "I am so glad you are here—so glad you are here." Much of this time was passed in repeating collects and Psalms, and in having me read the Bible to him—the lesson for the day, and Psalms and other parts which bore upon them. He seemed to commune constantly with God; and when I was not reading, I often heard him in prayer, but in a tone which did not allow me to hear the words. He was daily fitting for heaven. O God, why was he taken, and so many worthless left? "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight;" but it is hard to say.

In December he was ordered to take command of the department, General Johnston having been placed in command of the Army of Tennessee. He spent a few days in Brandon, seeing General Johnston, and returned on the eve of Christmas to spend it with us—the last we were together. I should have mentioned that Sally joined us on the 5th of December, and she and her father had much to say. On Tuesday, the 29th, the general removed to Meridian, while Sally and I followed on the 2d. I cannot say anything of the military affairs which so much engrossed him; I only know that, no matter at what hour of night he retired, he always awoke me to have prayers.

Upon one occasion I remember how much I was struck by his prayer for himself — the outpouring of his heart to his Maker, as a very present help who knew all, and yet to whom, as to a friend, it was his delight to unbosom his heart. His dependence upon God, his cheerful submission to his will, feeling it his duty to do everything he could and then leave the result in God's hands, ensured contentment in all that occurred. He had always had a great horror of death,—I mean the separation of soul and body. And when I would remark upon the sadness of life, he would say he did not think so at all; that there was so much to be thankful for in the daily gifts of life, and that the knowledge that we were daily doing the will of God brought with it such entire happiness, he was, if left to himself, unwilling to exchange it for a state of which he knows little; here faith must come in, and we must trust our future, as well as our present, in God's hands.

One morning he stretched out his arm and said, "To think that this arm, so full of life, must one day be quiet in the grave; that this right hand must lose its cunning, and this brain cease to think!" "But the soul does not," was my remark. "I know, in another sphere or form; but what pain and suffering may attend that change! I never like to think— I do not think — of it; I leave that to God, knowing that when the time comes, whatever befalls at the hour of death, grace and strength will be given to bear." I have sometimes thought his death was sent in mercy,—I mean its manner, for our Heavenly Father "considereth our frame."

One morning he was dressing, and, as his wont, talking a good deal. At last he said, "Wife, have you ever thought what you would do if I should be killed, and this contest prove unsuccessful?" I replied, "If we are all ruined together, I think I shall go into the Santa Anna,[1] until such time as my children can devise some means for my support." He came toward me with tears in his eyes, clasped me in his arms, and said, "I have not lived in vain if you can say and feel this. How changed in your apprehensions of evil!" And now, whatever comes, I think of him and of his pleasure that

[1] An asylum in New Orleans.

I could think of misfortune without being utterly cast down, and his spirit supports me. We had but few moments together, for his duties occupied the whole of his time; but those were very precious. The only time he ever alluded to the possibility of our want of success was the one mentioned above. One day we had been reading some of the collects, and he especially dwelt upon that for the fourth Sunday after Trinity, and remarked, "That is the best advice that can be given, as well as prayer." And on that dreadful day when he left me, I asked him, "Have you any message for our children?" He said, "Tell them, in the words of the collect, to take God for their ruler and guide, that they may so pass through things temporal that they may finally not lose things eternal. I can say no more than that if I spoke forever." On Monday, February 8, he left with the troops to meet General Sherman; the history of his plans and their result is written. The last few minutes were all he could give me; he spent part of those in praying with me for his family and country, and, commending us to God, left me.

As the spring opened, affairs in front of the army under General Johnston in northern Georgia began to wear a threatening aspect.

In anticipation of a general advance on the part of the enemy from that direction, and to guard the left of General Johnston's line, General Polk now pushed his infantry and a division of cavalry well up toward northern Alabama.

See "Official Records, War of Rebellion," vol. xxxii, pt. iii, p. 579, for a report to Department Headquarters upon the extent and kind of damage inflicted by General Sherman at and about Meridian. This report was made by the writer, March 3, 1864, after a careful personal inspection of the area in question. In the published records, through misreading, the report is signed A. H. instead of W. M. Polk, as in the original. See files, War Records Office.

CHAPTER IX.

ATLANTA CAMPAIGN AND DEATH OF GENERAL POLK.

MAY TO JUNE 14, 1864.

Sherman's movement against Johnston.—Polk ordered to Johnston's aid.—Assumes command at Resaca.—Sherman's strategy.—General McPherson.—Battle of Resaca.—Meeting of Johnston and Polk.—Retreat from Resaca.—A pen-picture of General Polk.—Baptism of Generals Hood and Johnston.—Johnston's account of the movements at Cassville.—A Sunday morning's service in the field.—Sherman's steady advance.—New Hope Church and Dallas.—General Polk's popularity.—Last letters to his family.—Hopeful and spirited condition of the army.—"Purity upon a field of blood."—The general's headquarters.—Last reading of the Church service.—A fatal ride.—Inspection of the works.—Dangerous exposure.—A farewell view.—The fatal shot.—The hero's death.

When General Polk found that his plan for operations upon General Sherman's rear were not approved, he concentrated his efforts upon his own front. The district of Mobile was so amply provided for in the thorough efficiency of its able commander, General Dabney H. Maury, but little was needed in that direction. The resources of the department were therefore directed toward points where just then more was to be gained. Provision was made for the brilliant operations of General Forrest in the district of north Mississippi and West Tennessee, and measures were adopted looking to an organized and continuous effort along the entire Mississippi river-front, to render the navigation of that stream as perilous as possible. We have seen that, in anticipation of General

Sherman's advance from Chattanooga, General Polk had placed the divisions of Loring and French, and the cavalry division of Jackson, at points in north Alabama from which he might meet any movement upon his own department, or move to General Johnston's aid, as should be required.

On May 5 General Sherman began his movement upon General Johnston at Dalton. The relative strength of the two forces was then about as two to one, General Sherman's army numbering about 98,000 men of all arms, and General Johnston's about 45,000.

In accordance with his expectations, General Polk on the 4th received a dispatch from General Johnston asking for assistance, and at the same time he received an order from the government to go to General Johnston's aid with all the troops that could be spared from his department.

After consulting with General Stephen D. Lee, who succeeded to the command, Polk telegraphed General Johnston that he would move at once to his relief with the infantry divisions of Canty, Loring, and French, and the cavalry of Jackson, about 19,000 men in all. Canty's division had already been sent forward from General Maury's district, and the remainder of the command now followed.

The concluding arrangement of the affairs of his department made it impossible for General Polk himself to leave before the 8th, the entire night of the 7th being spent in completing and in giving his final instructions and suggestions to Generals Lee and Forrest.

He reached Resaca with the rear of Loring's division on the 11th, his advance division (General Canty's) and Loring's advance brigade (Scott's), having arrived there the day before.[1] Under instructions from General John-

1 Canty's advance brigade arrived on the 8th.

ston, Polk now assumed command at this point, relieving General Hood, who only awaited his arrival to turn over the command and return to his corps at Dalton.

Resaca, commanding as it did the railroad bridge over the Oostenaula River, was a point of vital importance to the communications of General Johnston's army, not only with its base, Atlanta, but with Polk's command as well. Twenty miles in rear of Dalton, it could be easily reached from the direction of Sherman's right. Johnston had therefore halted here the advance of Polk's command (Canty's division), and charged it with the duty of protecting the position for the present.

General Sherman had by this time developed the initial steps of his campaign, which was to hold Johnston at Dalton by a bold threat upon his front, while he moved a strong column to his rear for the purpose of seizing and holding Resaca.

This was the first, and, all things considered, the best planned of that series of flank movements which characterized all General Sherman's operations in northern Georgia. Owing to his great superiority of force prior to Polk's arrival, which it is clear he had not then counted upon, he confidently expected at the outset to place his army upon General Johnston's communications, and thus at one blow sever him from his base, Atlanta. The movement had been carefully planned. Sherman's old troops, the army with which he and General Grant had won their fame, and which he himself had just employed in the Meridian campaign, were assigned the duty of executing it.

The officer in command, General McPherson, was one of the best soldiers in the Federal army, and the writer pauses a moment that he may pay tribute to his memory. Young, brave, and generous, full of life and courage, he

was one of the most interesting figures of the Civil War; and had he lived,[1] no doubt he would have won the highest place in the army of the United States.

While Sherman had been pressing Johnston in front, McPherson with 23,000 men turned the Confederate left and seized the railroad a few miles north of Resaca. A resolute advance might have fulfilled Sherman's expectations, but McPherson, finding that his own army had not followed his movement as closely as he expected, and being firmly resisted by Canty, withdrew his column, and allowed Johnston to reëstablish his communications.

General Polk's orders were to hold Resaca at all hazard pending the withdrawal which General Johnston was now attempting from Dalton. McPherson, reinforced by Hooker, was again but a few miles distant, advancing. Following him came the remainder of Sherman's army, through Snake Creek Gap. The enemy threatening his rear by a movement to cross the river below Resaca, General Polk detached Walker's division of Hood's corps, which had moved down from Dalton to his aid, to meet it.

On the 13th there was irregular skirmishing along Johnston's entire front, closing with an attack upon the position held by General Cheatham several miles northward. In order the better to cover Johnston's movement, Polk now threw forward Loring's division on the Snake Creek Gap road, where the enemy was met in heavy force and was held in check until the entire army was in position at Resaca,—Hood occupying the right, Hardee the center, and Polk the left. It seemed particularly appropriate that General Polk's command should be the one to meet and defeat this first movement, especially as the force with which Sherman attempted it was the one with which, as he claimed, he had so recently

1 General McPherson was killed in battle before Atlanta.

destroyed Polk in Mississippi. As a matter of personal gratification, the reception accorded General Polk by the commander of his own army compensates for the distress which the "Memoirs" show he caused General Sherman; for, as he reported at Dalton, Johnston grasped his extended hand, and, warmly shaking it, said, "How can I thank you? I asked for a division, but you have come yourself and brought me your army."

Saturday, the 14th, was passed in irregular skirmishing and in strengthening the defenses. A sharp and successful attack was now made upon the picket line in front of Canty. The line was carried by the enemy; being reinforced, Canty reëstablished it after a severe conflict. Later in the day, however, owing to the weakening of Polk's line to aid an attack upon the enemy's left by Hood, Canty lost a position held by his advance troops which commanded the railroad bridge. During the night the enemy crossed a division over the Oostenaula at Calhoun, and, in view of a retreat, which this movement made unavoidable, all wagon trains were now ordered to Kingston.

On Sunday, May 15, there was skirmishing on the entire line. In making a reconnoissance in front of his line, Polk became suddenly exposed to a heavy fire, during which the horse of one of his staff-officers was killed, and two were wounded; at the same time a bullet struck the horse which he himself was riding. At 2 P.M. an assault was made on Hood's line. It was successfully repelled, but the position at Resaca had become one of some peril without compensating advantage. A council of war was therefore called, an immediate retreat was resolved, and the corps commanders separated to put it into execution. General Polk was assigned the duty of covering the retreat by holding his position until the

remainder of the army could be withdrawn. Toward morning the Federals became aware of the retrograde movement, and, pressing forward, their advance in the darkness became mingled and confused with the rear of General Polk's command. Polk himself was one of the last to cross the bridge. which was then fired.

We may be pardoned for now presenting a final picture of Leonidas Polk as he appeared on the battlefield.[1]

Wrapped in his old gray hunting-shirt, with slouched hat and sabre, he sat his horse and received the leaden compliments of the enemy with complacent yet not indifferent good-humor. He had a habit of shrugging his shoulders when a Minié ball came too close to his ear, and sometimes he would drop a chance word as though in reply. But he never got out of the way for them, and, if there was anything interesting at hand, was wholly indifferent to their importunities. In battle he was a daring old man, with his heart in the fray, and his best faith on the result; riding through shot and shell from point to point, unconscious of danger, directing the movements of his line with a quiet self-possession which bespoke knowledge. At Shiloh, at Perryville, at Murfreesboro, at Chickamauga, and at Resaca, he was to be seen constantly at the front, at every part of his line, supervising the progress of events with his own presence. . . . One day at Resaca he called the writer of these rude lines and said, "You look hungry, and must divide my lunch with me." Some one had presented him a box of guava jelly and a bit of wheat bread (rarities in those Confederate times), and the prospect was tempting. "But," said I, "wouldn't it go a little better if we were in a safer place?" He laughed kindly, and replied, "Certainly it would." And we proceeded to find one. We had scarcely seated ourselves, however, behind an oak-tree at the bottom of the hill, when a shrapnel came tearing through the air, struck the oak broadside about thirty feet above us, and precipitated both, lunch and all, amid a mass of limbs and

[1] Sketch by the Hon. Henry Watterson.

fragments into a gully below. "Hey-dey!" cried the general, picking himself out of the rubbish, "you're a pretty fellow for selecting covers! Come! we may as well take ourselves back to the front." He was kind and considerate of his men; he was approachable and self-denying in his own person; and he did not know the name of fear. He possessed that faculty of inspiring all who came about him with courage, attributed to General Zachary Taylor. He was proverbial for getting into "hot places"; and he seemed to be able to pass along a line of fire like the children through the fiery furnace, untouched. His staff loved him most fondly. He was every inch a gentleman, without mannerism or assumption,—simple and innocent, yet dignified and imposing.

On the night of his arrival at Resaca he went with General Hood to Dalton to report to General Johnston. While on the way, General Hood signified to General Polk his desire to be baptized and received into the communion of the Episcopal Church, and it was arranged that the rite should be performed that same evening. On reaching Dalton, General Hood directed his aides to await him at his quarters, while the two generals repaired to army headquarters, where they remained with General Johnston until near midnight. They then went to General Hood's quarters, a room simply furnished with a mess-table and four chairs, and dimly lighted by a single candle. It was then occupied by a group of staff-officers. The simple preparation for the baptism was quickly made. The tin basin which was to serve as font being at hand, the general informed General Hood that he was ready. The gallant and sorely wounded soldier, who could kneel but with great difficulty, was told that he might sit; but he arose, and, leaning on his crutches, reverently bowed his head to be signed with the sign of the cross by the Bishop of Louisiana.

On Monday, the 16th, the retreat was continued to a

point two and a half miles south of Calhoun, where the army halted and preparations were made for a stand. The position was abandoned, however, and at 2.30 P.M. on Tuesday, the 17th, the retreat was resumed, and was continued on the 18th in the direction of Adairsville. About 5 P.M. on the 18th General Polk was requested by General Johnston to officiate in his priestly office, in accordance with the request of Mrs. Johnston, which had been previously expressed in the following exquisite note:

ATLANTA, GA., May 16.

My dear General Polk: You are never too much occupied, I well know, to pause to perform a good deed, and will, I am sure, even whilst leading your soldiers on to victory, lead my soldier nearer to God. General Johnston has never been baptized. It is the dearest wish of my heart that he should be, and that you should perform the ceremony would be a great gratification to me. I have written to him on the subject, and am sure he only waits your leisure. I rejoice that you are near him in these trying times. May God crown all your efforts with success, and spare your life for your country and friends.

With high esteem,

I remain, very truly yours,

L. MCLANE JOHNSTON.

That night, after the usual conference with his corps-commanders, General Johnston was baptized. Kneeling in his tent with but the four present, the bishop fulfilled his wish, the witnesses being General Hardee and General Hood.

On the 19th the retreat was continued to Cassville. The enemy advanced slowly and cautiously, with about half his force near Kingston, the remainder following the retreating army from Adairsville. General Johnston decided to send the two corps (Hood's and Polk's), which

were then at Cassville, to attack the force advancing from Adairsville, Hood's corps leading on the right.

In reference to this movement we now give General Johnston's letter, kindly written to Colonel W. D. Gale, General Polk's aide-de-camp. As will be seen, it states General Polk's attitude at Cassville more fully than was done in General Johnston's official report and in his "Narrative," and in so doing it does him justice.

SAVANNAH, May 24, 1869.

My dear Colonel: I have just had the pleasure to read your letter of the 17th. You can well understand that the good wishes and kindly feelings of those with whom I was associated in the most trying period of my life are more valuable to me than those of other men. I assure you that our intercourse in that time was of a nature to make me value your friendly language especially. As to the occurrences at Cassville: there were two changes of plan there, one in the morning, when an intended attack on the enemy was prevented by General Hood, who made a retrograde instead of a forward movement as ordered; the other at night. The first was that which disappointed the army. It was to the second that you refer. Both are mentioned briefly in my report of the campaign.

In the first case the Federal army advancing from Adairsville was divided, the larger portion following the road by Kingston, the other the direct one by which Polk's and Hood's corps had marched the day before. I determined to attack the latter with those two corps, General Polk to meet and attack the enemy in front, General Hood to move northward by a parallel country road, a mile east of the main one, and fall upon his left flank. A brief order, you may remember, was read to the troops, announcing that they were about to assume the offensive. While we were waiting for Hood's corps to get into position (for it was to be in advance by a distance equal to its front), the general heard in some way that a Federal army was approaching our right from the rear by

the Canton road. Without informing me, he moved back and formed his corps across that road facing to the east. This frustrated the intended attack, and made a defensive position or retreat necessary. The first course was adopted, and the crest of the ridge in the rear of Cassville, previously examined, was chosen. Soon after the troops were formed on it, a light cannonade was begun by the enemy, which was continued until night. Regarding the right and center as strong, I passed the afternoon with General Hardee on the left, and after sunset met you on the road from Cassville to Cartersville, a little in the rear of General Polk's center, and received what I took for an invitation to sup with General Polk to meet the other lieutenant-generals. I went about eight o'clock, and found General Hood, but not General Hardee, with General Polk. The former introduced the subject of our position and the cannonade, which he said enfiladed a part of his and a part of General Polk's line so severely as to have produced demoralization of the exposed troops, especially the part of French's division that occupied the enfiladed portion of General Polk's position. Both expressed the opinion that the Federal artillery would so sweep these two points next day that they would be untenable; they held it to be necessary to the safety of the army, therefore, that it should be moved before daybreak, and cross the Etowah. After a discussion of about two hours, I yielded, on the ground that it would be hazardous to attempt to defend a position regarded as untenable by two of the three lieutenant-generals; for I thought the exposure to artillery much less than it had been in front of Resaca, where Hardee's right and Hood's left joined. Hardee joined the party near eleven o'clock, and was greatly disappointed to learn the determination to abandon such a position, for he and his men were full of confidence. You say truly that General Polk advocated offensive fighting. He was anxious that we should assail the enemy, and if he, instead of General Hood, had been on the right in the morning, the attack ordered would have been executed. He was opposed, however, to the course I thought most politic for us then—defending intrenched lines. Our difference of opinion on

these military[1] questions did not in the least affect our personal relations.

General Hardee heard the reason of the order to fall back from General Hood. I think that General Clayton was occasionally present during the evening. I have no recollection of seeing General French during the evening. He was repeatedly quoted, however.

Yours very truly,

J. E. JOHNSTON.

The continuation of our story is now mainly reproduced from Colonel Gale's diary:

"ALTOONA, Sunday, May 22.

"Still waiting, the army resting. After breakfast the general ordered his horse, and, taking two officers of his personal staff, rode off, without indicating where he was going. Passing along the bank of Altoona Creek, amidst his troops, he proceeded to the brigade of General Sayers. While at Demopolis, a young Mr. Bakewell, from Louisiana, who had been studying for the ministry and was a candidate for orders, came to headquarters to obtain permission to repair to some place where he could be ordained, with the view of being assigned to duty with some Louisiana regiment as its chaplain. His request was cheerfully complied with. He left, and, in the hurry and excitement that ensued, was apparently forgotten. He had been kept in mind, however, and now General Polk availed himself of his first leisure moment to lend him assistance and encouragement. Finding him with his regiment, he asked to hear him read the church service. The regiment was

[1] We here refer the reader to the report of General Polk's engineer officer, Captain Walter J. Morris, for the reasons which governed General Polk in the advice which he gave on this occasion. See Appendix to Chapter IX.

soon assembled on the slope of a hill, and there under the shade of the forest trees, surrounded by his troops, sitting, standing, and kneeling, this beautiful Sunday morning, the general listened while this young man led the service. This was the last time General Polk ever heard the service read by mortal lips except his own. After a few minutes of private conversation with Mr. Bakewell, he bade him good-by and returned to his own camp."

On Monday, the 23d, the army marched toward Dallas to oppose the advance of Sherman in that direction. It reached the vicinity of New Hope Church on the evening of the 25th. Here a fierce but unsuccessful onslaught was made, first upon Hood's corps and then upon a portion of Hardee's. In this position Johnston's army stood on the defensive and was constantly under fire. Day by day, and in regular lines of intrenchment, Sherman approached. Polk, as usual, devoted his personal attention to his command. His habit was to rise early, take a light breakfast, mount his horse, and, accompanied by his aides, inspect his entire line minutely, patiently, and thoroughly. He never appeared to grow weary; his mental and physical endurance throughout those last days excelled that of the youngest and most hardy of his staff.

Sherman, having failed to dislodge the Confederate line, now withdrew a portion of his command, with a view to turning Johnston's right and reaching Marietta at one stroke; but Hardee and Polk held McPherson so closely to his position upon the Federal right at Dallas that he could not be extricated in time to permit the carrying out of Sherman's design. In order to meet Sherman's movement, which had extended to the rail-

road north of Marietta, Johnston now resolved to change his position to the right.

Before this movement was definitely ordered, however, a general attack upon the Federal army had been considered by Johnston and his subordinates. Hood urged that it should be initiated by an attack upon Sherman's left flank. This suggestion was adopted, but, when attempted, was found impracticable because it was met by the flanking movement which Sherman was then making in the same direction. Sherman's preponderance of force enabled him to detach a good portion of his force for operations upon the flank, and yet leave enough men in hand for aggressions in front, should the opportunity present. Therefore the withdrawal of Johnston's army from its position at New Hope Church was a movement of delicacy, requiring tact and celerity.

General Polk gave close personal attention to the preparations necessary for withdrawing his command. Roads were cut, bridges were built, guides were provided, and a staff-officer was assigned to each division to conduct it over a road which he himself had previously examined.

The night of the 5th of June was selected for the withdrawal. Rain and heat had added to the many discomforts of the army. The night set in with drizzling rain and fog. Each staff-officer received, as usual, from General Polk himself, minute instructions for the march. The line began to move at 11 P.M., leaving skirmishers in position, to be relieved by cavalry at 2 A.M. General Polk followed his command, groping its way through mud and water over narrow and difficult roads. Wherever confusion occurred he was at hand to direct, restore order, and set the column again in motion. Throughout the night he rode back and forth along the

line, splashing through mud, plunging through water, drenched with rain, keeping the column on its march. At dawn he left the men kindling their fires, went to an abandoned dwelling near by, and, throwing himself on his sheepskin, sought a short rest.

The morning of Tuesday, June 7, was passed in comparative quiet, the men being busy with the defenses. At noon a heavy rain flooded the ground and filled the newly made trenches. During the day General Polk was riding rapidly in front of the newly formed line, and, having passed beyond the right of his command, came in front of some Louisiana troops who had served under him at Columbus and Belmont, but who had been separated from him since the battle of Shiloh. As he came in sight a few irregular shouts arose, and as soon as the troops recognized their former general an outburst of huzzas from the entire line greeted his approach. He advanced to the troops which had given so hearty a reception, and entered into conversation with them. After a while, with encouraging words of confidence and hope, he raised his cap and rode away amid renewed cheers.

This incident was but one of many such which greeted General Polk during this period. First and last, nearly every command in that army had served under his immediate orders, and, as General Johnston wrote but a short time before his own death: "As General Polk had served in that army from its formation, he was greatly loved and admired in it." In fact, as another companion in arms has written of him, "Leonidas Polk's character, viewed in its double light of bishop and general, priest and soldier, in its severe simplicity of truthfulness, inspired the warmest love and most ardent admiration. His brother officers confided in him and relied upon him; the soldiers trusted him and loved him."

On Wednesday, June 8, the army was settling down in the defenses of the newly formed line. With his command protected, and all quiet, General Polk indulged in the relaxation of "company to dinner," having sent notes of invitation to Generals Hardee and Hood to join him. General Hood, being indisposed, was compelled to decline. General Hardee came. In order to give them the best entertainment in his power the lean calf had been killed, whose dam had just helped to appease the cravings of a neighboring regiment. Aaron, the colored cook, made the best of his scanty resources. The calf's-head soup was pronounced to be all that could be desired, and with jest and anecdote to season the homely meal the generals and their aides enjoyed the dinner with greater zest than they might have done on more formal occasions.

On Thursday, June 9, General Polk rose at daylight and rode to the front, and afterward to army headquarters to confer with the commanding general. In the afternoon he superintended a change of the position of his command, which was moved more to the right, although on the same line.

We now present, consecutively, extracts from letters written by General Polk to members of his family during the campaign.

They tell, better than anything heretofore made public, the condition of the army; and they are a sufficient answer, not only to criticisms which have been directed against General Johnston's conduct of its affairs, but are also a reply to those which assumed the existence of dissensions between Johnston and his corps-commanders. Up to the time of General Polk's death nothing of that nature was developed, and the writer believes that, had Polk lived, General Johnston would never have been

displaced from the command of this army. From the close of the Kentucky campaign until Johnston was finally placed in command, Polk, as we have seen, continued to urge his assignment to the command of the Army of Tennessee, and the expressions in the privacy of these letters show the continuance of his confidence and regard.

General Polk's attitude toward the tale-bearers and gossips whom the rivalries and jealousies common to a soldier's life seem inevitably to develop in every army, is characteristically expressed in a reply which he made to one of them the day after the retreat from Cassville. He was told there was a current report in the army to the effect that he and General Hood were responsible for the failure of the army to fight at that position. "Is that so?" replied Polk. "Well, you may say that I take all the blame upon myself." Later, when one of his aides remonstrated with him, he said, "Ah, well; let it go, my shoulders are no doubt broad enough to bear it." His real responsibility we have already shown.

ALTOONA STATION, SIX MILES SOUTH OF THE ETOWAH RIVER, May 21, 1864.

My dear Wife: I informed you I had been ordered by the President to turn over the temporary command of my department to General Lee, and to take charge of so much of my force as I deemed I could spare from the department, to move to the assistance of General Johnston. I did so, and joined him with the divisions of General Loring, General French, and General Canty (infantry), and of General Jackson (of the cavalry). I was placed in command of the left wing of the army (infantry). After my army joined it, I held Resaca until General Johnston's forces passed the Oostenaula at that place. . . . We lost nothing, and burned the bridge after us. Since that we have been falling back from point to point, to find ground on which General Johnston was willing

to fight them. I think, with the addition of force brought from Mississippi, we are strong enough to do all that ought to be asked of us, and by God's blessing to have our own way with what is before us. When General Johnston will offer battle I do not know, but think that it cannot be many days hence. The troops are in fine spirit, and feel quite confident of their ability to succeed to the utmost of their wishes.

The campaign has been a very hard one thus far; a good deal of marching and but little sleep. . . . All my old friends are much pleased to see me here again, and the troops have received me with cordial demonstrations of pleasure. All this is very grateful to my feelings, and I hope I appreciate it properly.

You will be interested in hearing that the first night of my arrival with the army I baptized Lieutenant-General Hood. It was on the eve of an expected battle. The scene was a touching one,—he, with one leg, leaning on his crutches, a veteran in the midst of his and my officers, and I the officiating minister. His heart was fully in it. A few nights after, at the instance of General Johnston, and in compliance with the request of the enclosed note, I baptized him also, Lieutenant-Generals Hardee and Hood being witnesses. It was a deeply solemn scene, and what a passage for history!

NEAR NEW HOPE CHURCH,
Friday, 27th May, 1864.

My beloved Wife: I wrote you about four days ago stating we were all well. Since then I have received your welcome letter, written on our wedding-day. How many delightful reflections and remembrances that day suggests. We have had our trials, dear wife, but we have had our blessings too, and oh! how many, in comparison with the unworthiness of the subjects of them! God be praised for all his mercies, but, above and beyond all, for the knowledge and grace brought to us through his beloved Son, our Lord and Saviour. I thank him and praise him, and magnify his holy name for all his abounding loving-kindness and tender mercies. We have as yet not met the enemy in a pitched battle, but I think we shall

before many days. Our troops are in exceedingly fine spirits and very confident. We have, I think, a very fine army, and one which is very united. The relations between the general officers—Johnston, Hardee, Hood, and myself—are very pleasant.

I hope your health has become better, or at least that it will become so. "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid"; your Father's hand is under you, and he will take care of you and yours, hereafter as heretofore. Give my tender love to all the dear children.

NEW HOPE CHURCH, PAULDING CITY,
NEAR MARIETTA, GA., June 1, 1864.

My dear Wife: I am in receipt yesterday of your letter of the 25th, which was very welcome, as it gave me intelligence of your improving health. I can well imagine your surprise at finding me so suddenly transferred to the field. But it is what might have been expected, and considering that the Army of the Mississippi (Federal) was sent here, there was a propriety in the Army of the Mississippi (Confederate) being sent also to confront it. I have been very hard at work getting my army into condition, and have now about 14,000 effectives—that is, muskets (independent of officers)—of infantry, and about 4000 cavalry; in all, an army of about 19,000 men.

This army, too, is in fine condition and fine spirits. It is a most welcome addition to the strength of Johnston. I think I have never seen the troops, one and all, in such fine spirits and condition as they now are, and am of the very common opinion that under God we shall beat them when the collision shall take place. Indeed, the army is just ready to go along itself when it shall be put at its work. Their numbers are somewhat larger than ours, but the difference is not such as in our opinion to affect the result. I think it likely we shall find it expedient to pass the Chattahoochie, but the battle may happen on this side.

LOST MOUNTAIN P. O., June 7, 1864,
. 9½ MILES FROM MARIETTA.

My beloved Wife: We are all well. Our army is in fine spirits, and, under God, quite ready to meet the enemy. But he does not appear to be inclined to meet us. He prefers operating on our flanks. I take it Johnston will terminate this shortly. He is suffering by delay much more than we are. Indeed, my own Army of the Mississippi has increased, and is increasing every day; we are stronger by several thousand than when I started from Mississippi, and my command is in fine condition, and is thought to be well organized and equipped, and the spirit of its administration is as fine as I could desire, great harmony prevailing everywhere.

We had, three nights ago, the hardest and most trying march I have ever experienced. All night in the rain, and the roads as sloppy and deep as you may imagine; the cheerful spirits of the troops, joking, etc., was very striking. I am ordered to move my army from the extreme left over to the extreme right to-day, and it is now moving. My right will rest on the railroad station above Marietta. The troops are well fed, and we are getting plenty of subsistence for the horses. My staff is well organized and quite full, so that there is no confusion, and there is efficiency.

IN THE FIELD, FOUR MILES NORTH OF MARIETTA,
June 11, 1864.

Things are much as they have been for some days past. We have taken up a strong position, which we have fortified and now hold, across the railroad four miles above Marietta. The enemy has rebuilt the railroad bridge across the Etowah, and will be able to use it to-morrow or the next day most probably. He is in the meantime deploying in our front so as to extend over the ground covered by us. He will perhaps not move forward until his supplies get up by rail; this may take a day or two. Nor do I think he will attack us in front. He will most probably attempt to occupy us in front while he attempts to turn one or other of our flanks — I think our right flank. Our army is in fine condition and in excellent spirits,

and I think, under the blessing of God, will do its duty. We feel easy about the result, though there must be inevitably a good deal of hard fighting.

I have never known the army to be so well clad and shod and fed as at present, or so well organized, or so easily handled. Its experience in campaigning has been highly instructive and profitable, and its general temper is as good as we could desire. This is quite remarkable, seeing that the campaign from Dalton down to this place has certainly been the hardest I have experienced since the war began. It is very gratifying to find that the troops and the country appear to have undiminished confidence in the ability and skill of General Johnston, and he seems to be managing things very prudently. Our losses in the campaign have been comparatively small. I think those of the enemy cannot fall much short of 20,000 from the battles and skirmishes and other causes, so that upon the whole the situation is satisfactory. . . .

I continue to receive every day fresh accessions to my command. My own health has at no time been better, and you may say to your mother that she is greatly mistaken if she thinks I do not take care of myself.

We now give the last letter written by Leonidas Polk.

June 13, 1864.

My dear Daughter: Since I heard of your marriage I have been more constantly and intently engaged than I have been in any campaign I have ever made, and so have not found time to write to you as I had hoped.

You have now, my dear child, entered upon a new field, and under God's blessing (upon which, if you look to him, you may count) your future happiness and success will depend very much upon yourself. Do always what is right, not calculating what is expedient, but try and find out what is right, and with a pure heart and true devotion go straight forward and do it. Be always kind and considerate of the feelings and rights of others, and you will be very apt to have your feelings and rights respected. Watch against im-

patience of spirit. If you keep your heart always under the dominion of the grace of God's spirit you will be very apt to have your own power of self-control complete and perfect. That is a thing to be cultivated, and is the fruit of watchfulness and prayerfulness. Let it be the business of your life to strive for large attainments in that way. It will be your greatest safety from yourself, the world, and the devil, and will be a shield and tower of strength for you. . . .

I trust it cannot be a great while before this war will be at an end, and we shall then find field enough for us all to make a living in, and that we shall in the meantime practice such economy as shall enable us to live through the war.

I am now looking for an attack of the enemy on our lines, and avail myself of the pause and quiet that prevail to write you these few lines.

Our army is in good spirits, and confident, under the blessing of God, of success in the coming conflict. It is also in high condition. Our trust is in God.

May the good Lord bless and keep you and yours, my dear child, in all your coming experiences and trial of life, and afterward receive you to glory, is the prayer of your affectionate father. L. POLK.

On the morning of Friday, June 10, before leaving his headquarters on his daily round, General Polk gave orders to have them removed to the dwelling of Mr. Hardige, a mile nearer Marietta. There were several young grandchildren of his host, Mr. Kirk,[1] who had been objects of interest to the staff, but to no one of them more than to General Polk. One of his aides had given each of the children a plate of sorghum molasses as a treat before leaving. They had made good use of it, and bountifully smeared their lips and cheeks with its sweetness. In this plight General Polk found

[1] Mr. Kirk, seventy-eight years old, had given eight sons to the Confederate army, five of whom had been killed in battle.

them as he was about to leave. He stooped down and raised a curly-headed girl of four summers, of whom he had become very fond, and set her on his knee, to give her a parting kiss. After several attempts he said as if to himself, "I can't find a spot clean enough to kiss," and then to an officer near, "I have a great mind to get some water and wash her face; do you think her mother would care?" He took another look, got in a kiss somewhere amidst the molasses, and, letting her gently down from his knee, moved away.

The enemy now appeared in front, and there was heavy skirmishing all along the line.

Saturday, June 11, set in gloomy and rainy. Mr. Hardige's dwelling, General Polk's present headquarters, was four miles from Marietta, on the Lost Mountain road, almost under the shadow of Kenesaw Mountain. It was a frame house, with the body of it partitioned into two rooms. A piazza extended along the front of the dwelling, and one end of it was boarded in so as to form a room, which was set apart for him. It was furnished with a single bed, a small table, and a chair. On the table were inkstand, pens, paper, and envelopes, such as the hard fortunes of the Confederacy afforded, together with maps of the surrounding country. In a corner stood his sword. In front of the house, a little to one side, within call, was a large tent, which was his adjutant-general's office, while the wooded slope of an adjacent lot was whitened with the tents and enlivened by the camp-fires of his general staff and his escort, the Orleans light-horse.

We quote again from Colonel Gale's diary:

To-day several designs for corps, division, and brigade flags were submitted to the general, and for his headquarters he selected a white cross on a red field, with the remark that

he liked it best because of the emblem, "Purity upon a field of blood." In the afternoon he rode to the front and thence to army headquarters, returning at night during a heavy rain.

On Sunday, June 12, the morning broke foggy and rainy. For twelve successive days it had rained more or less heavily. The roads were almost impassable, and the condition of the men in the trenches was deplorable.

General Polk seemed more abstracted to-day than usual. He kept his room and was engaged in reading his Bible and some little books which had been prepared by Dr. Quintard, and adapted to the use of the soldiers as a convenient substitute for the Book of Common Prayer. The general seemed deeply interested, as he was observed to be intently reading them by an officer who had occasion to enter his room on official business. The rain was still pouring down through the rising fog. An occasional shot from the skirmish-line, as it sent its deadened report through the heavy air, was all that reminded us that the enemy was still near. About 10 A.M., the general came out and said to an officer of his staff that he would like to read the church service. The announcement gave general satisfaction, and in a few moments the family sitting-room was made ready, and the audience assembled. A small table placed near a window served as a desk. The room, the house, the piazza, were filled with men in gray, and, as there was not space enough inside, quite a number stood near the windows and doors and under the dripping eaves; their rapt attention gave evidence of their interest in the occasion. Of those who were within, some sat in chairs, some on the floor, and others stood during the whole service, while those without, drawing their hats down over their necks, stood patiently while the pouring rain ran in rivulets down their shoulders. With dignity and solemnity worthy of a prophet of old, the general read the service throughout, and joined in the singing of a psalm and hymn, his whole manner being remarkable for its impressive-

ness and devotion. In a voice tremulous with emotion he read the concluding prayer, and, asking a blessing, sat down in profound silence. This was the last time he ever read the service of the Church.

The morning of Monday, June 13, broke like the day before it, foggy and rainy. As all was quiet in front, General Polk remained within doors, writing. About 11 A.M. he received the following note from general headquarters:

9.30 A.M., June 13, 1864.

General: You will do me a favor by giving me the benefit of your opinion on the subject of the mode of occupying our intrenchments to the best advantage. It is important that we should keep in our works only the number of men necessary to hold them, that we may have a strong movable force. For the line you now occupy, how many men, on an average, would be necessary for each one hundred yards, and how many guns for the front?

I respectfully suggest that your artillery officer and Brigadier-General Shoup together examine the line from your right to General Hood's, to determine what number of guns can be advantageously placed upon it.

Very respectfully,

J. E. JOHNSTON.

LIEUTENANT-GENERAL POLK.

To this General Polk replied:

June 13, 1864, 1.30 P.M.

General: I have had a conference with my division commanders, and have arrived at the conclusion that I could, in case of an attack by us on the enemy, hold the line now occupied by my command with a fraction more than one third of its whole force, say 5000 men. That presumes that the other two thirds are out of the trenches, in the rear of the line, and held ready to be employed, either to support the right or the left, or to be used to support the front line should it be

attacked. I am in receipt of your note from General Hood, and perceive he makes about the same estimate. I will call this evening and see you.

Yours respectfully,

L. POLK, *Lieutenant-General.*

GENERAL J. E. JOHNSTON.

General Polk went to army headquarters and had a consultation with the commanding general, who expressed a desire to make a personal inspection, on the following morning, of an advanced position, held by the division of Major-General Bate, on Pine Mountain, and he requested General Polk to accompany him and assist in the examination. An appointment for that purpose having been made, General Polk returned to his headquarters.

The morning of Tuesday, June 14, dawned clear, and the rainy season seemed to be over. General Polk took an early breakfast, and his horse was ready to be mounted as soon as General Johnston appeared. In the meantime he sent the following, his last order, to Major-General French:

June 14, 1864, 8 A.M.

General: General Polk desires you to extend your present line, at once, to the left, so as to cover the recent line occupied by General Canty. Respectfully,

THOS. M. JACK, *A. A.-G.*

MAJOR-GENERAL FRENCH.

He then sent verbal directions to General French to extend his skirmishers so as to connect with the skirmish line of General Hardee, the writer being charged with the delivery of this message and the supervision of the execution of its details.[1]

[1] General Polk called the writer to him, and leaning upon his shoulder, drew the line of battle upon the ground with the toe of his boot. Then, explaining what was needed, he directed him to execute it, and after that to report back to headquarters and await his return.

General Johnston arrived soon after 8 A.M. General Polk mounted and rode with him toward the headquarters of General Hardee, who was to join them in the examination. Each general was attended by several members of his staff. General Polk was accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonel Jack, A. A.-G., Colonel W. D. Gale,[1] A.-D.-C., Major Frank McNairy, volunteer A.-D.-C., and Lieutenant Hopkins of the Orleans light-horse. The party reached the quarters of General Hardee about 10 A.M. and dismounted; after a short consultation all mounted again and rode forward. In a few minutes they were on the main line of the intrenchments, through which they passed and continued their course for nearly a mile, when they dismounted behind a sharp hill, known as Pine Mountain, and moved cautiously over the top, and then down a few yards to a small earthwork, occupied by a battery and its supports.

On reaching the crest of the hill the spectators had a full view of the surrounding country, over which sunshine and shadow moved, keeping pace with the slowly drifting clouds. Both lines of battle were plainly visible. Bodies of men could be seen, busy with axe and spade. Guns were being placed in position. Groups of officers could be distinguished moving about behind the lines. The adjacent fields were white with the covers of a thousand wagons. In the distance, to the front, lay the hills of the Etowah; to the right, the peaks of Kenesaw.

The constant firing of the heavy lines of skirmishers, reinforced here and there by the guns of some battery, whose position was marked by the white smoke which in the still air settled about it—all combined to make the

[1] The account of this ride and General Polk's death is taken from the notes of General Polk's aide, Colonel W. D. Gale.

scene one of unusual beauty and grandeur. In the enthusiasm of the moment some of the officers stood on the parapet and exposed themselves to the sharp gaze of hostile eyes. The men of the battery vainly warned them of the danger. While they were speaking there was a flash, a puff of smoke, a sharp report, and in an instant fragments of splintered rock and flying earth scattered around them, as a shot was buried in the parapet. The officers separated, each seeking some place of greater safety. General Johnston and General Polk moved together to the left, and stood for a few moments in earnest conversation behind a parapet. Several shots now passed together just above the parapet and touched the crest of the hill. Generals Johnston and Polk, having apparently completed their observations, began to retrace their steps. General Johnston fell a few paces behind, and diverged to the right; General Polk walked to the crest of the hill, and, entirely exposed, turned himself around, as if to take a farewell view. Folding his arms across his breast, he stood intently gazing on the scene below. While he thus stood, a cannon-shot crashed through his breast, and opening a wide door, let free that indomitable spirit. He fell upon his back, with his feet to the foe. Amid the shot and shell now poured upon the hill, his faithful escort gathered up the body and bore it to the foot of the hill. There, in a sheltered ravine, his sorrow-stricken comrades, silent and in tears, gathered around his mangled corpse.

Hardee, bending over the lifeless form, said to Johnston, "General, this has been a dear visit. We have lost a brave man, whose death leaves a vacancy not easily filled"; then, kneeling by the side of the dead body, he exclaimed: "My dear, dear friend, little did I think this morning that I should be called upon to witness this."

Johnston, with tears in his eyes, knelt and laid his hand upon the cold brow of the fallen hero, saying, "We have lost much! I would rather anything but this."

During the afternoon Hood wrote to Johnston: "I am too sad to come over this evening. It is hard that one so noble, generous, and brave as our friend should be taken from us."

The news went along the line from left to right that Polk had fallen. It reached the pickets, passed from them to the enemy in front, then to their comrades in the rear. Before his limbs were become rigid in death, his fall was known in Washington as well as Richmond.

His body was at length placed in an ambulance, and the mournful cavalcade slowly and silently retraced its steps, and followed his remains to headquarters. "Jerry," the noble roan he had ridden in nearly all his marches and battles, was led riderless in front.

That afternoon the following general order to the army marked the end of the eventful career of Leonidas Polk:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF TENNESSEE,
IN THE FIELD, June 14, 1864.

General Field Orders No. 2.

Comrades: You are called to mourn your first captain, your oldest companion in arms. Lieutenant-General Polk fell to-day at the outpost of this army,—the army he raised and commanded, in all of whose trials he shared, to all of whose victories he contributed.

In this distinguished leader we have lost the most courteous of gentlemen, the most gallant of soldiers.

The Christian, patriot, soldier, has neither lived nor died in vain. His example is before you; his mantle rests with you.

J. E. JOHNSTON, *General.*

KINLOCK FALCONER, *A. A.-G.*

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER IX.

NEW YORK, June 25, 1878.

DR. W. M. POLK, 288 Fifth Avenue, New York.

Dear Sir: In reply to your note of the 20th inst., asking me to give you my recollections of the circumstances in regard to the retreat of the Confederate armies from Cassville, Ga., to the south side of the Etowah River, I will state the facts as connected with myself, as follows:

At the time when the Confederate armies of Tennessee and Mississippi, under the command of General J. E. Johnston, and the Federal armies under General Sherman, were manœuvering in the neighborhood of Cassville, I had nearly completed my journey from Demopolis, Ala., to that town, to join Lieutenant-General Polk, commanding the Army of Mississippi, who was with General Johnston in that vicinity. I had crossed the country in company with a part of that command. I arrived at the Cassville railway station about half-past three or four o'clock of the afternoon of the 19th of May, 1864, and met one of our staff, who informed me that the lieutenant-general desired to see me as soon as I arrived. I passed on without delay to his headquarters, about half a mile to the northeast of the railway station, and met General Polk at the door of the cabin used for headquarter purposes. I entered immediately, and he placed a skeleton map before me, giving the surrounding country, and pointed out the positions of the Confederate forces, and the known and supposed locations of the Federals, giving such additional information as to enable me to fully understand the actual condition of affairs. This was done rapidly. He then requested me to go at once and examine the extreme right of his line, as he considered it untenable for defense.

First. He desired me to form an opinion if, by constructing a rifle-pit, his line could be held against such an attack as might be reasonably expected in the morning.

Second. To carefully examine that part of the line enfiladed, to see if it was possible to construct traverses to enable him to hold the position on the defensive.

Third. To examine the ground immediately in his front, in reference to advancing, and to note in reference the positions then occupied by the several batteries in front and to the right of Lieutenant-General Hood's line.

Fourth. If these batteries to the front and right of Hood's line could be taken by special movement.

These explanations, noting them down and getting a tracing of the skeleton map, required about thirty minutes, and I started for that part of the line in question, General Polk impressing upon me the necessity of reaching that part of the line as soon as possible, as I would only have about two hours of daylight to make the examinations. Furnishing me with a fresh horse, one of his own, and the necessary guides from his escort, I reached the ground in fifteen minutes. I was instructed to return as soon after dark as possible, for, if necessary, an invitation would be sent to General Johnston to come to his (General Polk's) headquarters. Lieutenant-General Hood was, I think, with General Polk when I left.

Arriving upon the line of battle, I found Major-General French's division (Army of the Mississippi) located on the extreme right of the army, and occupying the part of the line in question. To his right was the line of Lieutenant-General Hood's corps (Army of Tennessee), forming the extreme right of the Confederate infantry forces.

The crest of the ridge occupied by French's division was about 140 feet above the plain or valley in which the town of Cassville is located. This ridge is cut across by a ravine of about 50 feet deep, its sides rising from the bottom on either side at about 30 degrees. The location of this ravine on French's line was 500 or 600 feet to the left of his extreme right. To the left of this ravine, for 1200 or 1500 feet, the crest of the ridge was entirely open, as was to the rear for 800

or 1000 feet. There were a few scattered trees of stunted growth in and about the ravine. The remaining portion of General French's line to the left and to the rear was timbered, as also to the front for 100 to 800 feet, increasing in depth toward the left. The ground to the front of the left half of his line descended about 140 feet for half a mile, continuing on to Cassville, about one and a quarter miles to the northwest of his left. The ground in front of the right half of his line descended about 100 feet on the left and 80 feet on the right, for a distance of one half mile on the left, and one fourth of a mile on the extreme right, then ascending to 80 feet on the left and 100 on the right to a ridge opposite and due north. This opposing ridge passed on a line about 23 degrees south of west, forming an angle with General Polk's line of defense of about 25 degrees, and forming something less of an angle with Lieutenant-General Hood's line. This opposite ridge was occupied by the enemy: their left resting on a point about one and a quarter miles northeast, on a prolongation of General Polk's line, and from one half to three quarters of a mile in front of Lieutenant-General Hood's, and passing on to the westward at a distance of one half a mile to one and a quarter miles north of General Polk's, and in front of his extreme right. The line occupied by the enemy on the opposing ridge was from 20 to 40 feet higher than the position of General Hood's line, and from 40 to 60 feet higher than General Polk's. The batteries of the enemy were posted on the most prominent and available points along their ridge, extending for a mile from their extreme left toward their right, reaching a point to the north and front of General Polk's extreme right, and directly in front of the ravine, and open part of French's lines. These batteries enfiladed and cross-fired upon the entire open crest from 45 to 50 degrees, and with a plunging fire from 20 to 60 feet, and sweeping through the ravine and across the rear of the ridge to a distance of about 1000 feet — this rear fire being still more plunging than that on the crest.

There was no cover for the men within a reasonable distance to the crest, for, from the extreme positions of the left batteries of the enemy, it would not be necessary for them to

cease firing, during an attack, until their infantry had reached a line very close to the crest of the ridge occupied by Polk's command.

The extreme right or eastern batteries of the enemy necessarily enfiladed a considerable portion of General Hood's line. Having made these examinations and noted them down, I formed the following opinions:

First. That the right of the line occupied by Lieutenant-General Polk's command could not be held as it then was, nor could it be held by constructing a rifle-pit along the crest.

Second. That traverses would be of no avail either for the rifle-pits upon the crest or as a covered way to the rear, as such traverses would cover nearly the entire surface.

Third. That it was extremely hazardous for Lieutenant-General Polk to advance his line to make an attack upon the enemy while their batteries held the positions they occupied.

Fourth. As to forming an opinion as to the taking of these left batteries of the enemy by special flank movement: This I could not do, as I was unable to examine to the right of General Hood's line, as it had grown dark; but, judging from the stream as located on the skeleton map, there must have been a very narrow ridge to approach the enemy upon their left.

At the time I arrived about the center of General Polk's right, where the open crest of the ridge commenced, I found a very heavy enfilading and cross fire going on from the enemy's batteries; there were but a few sentinels remaining upon the crest. The main body of men intended to occupy this part of the line were compelled to withdraw to the right and left at the foot of the ridge, out of sight, but not out of range of the enemy's batteries. I found that Major-General French had one or two batteries in position upon this part of the line near the ravine; and while they were coming into their positions, and before the guns could be unlimbered, from one to two horses of each piece were killed. On my return over this part of the line about dark, the fire from the enemy had nearly ceased.

Having completed this reconnaissance, I returned to Lieu-

tenant-General Polk's headquarters just after dark. I placed before him my sketches and notes, and explained to him substantially these facts. Lieutenant-General Polk sent at once to ask General Johnston to come to his headquarters. Lieutenant-General Hood was already with General Polk. General Johnston arrived about nine o'clock. I remained in the cabin during the conversation as to holding the position then occupied, or advancing or retiring the armies to the south of the Etowah River, about seven miles to our rear. Lieutenant-General Polk expressed himself convinced that he could not hold his line against attack, and that Major-General French, who occupied that part of his line in question, was of the same opinion, as was his (General Polk's) engineer (myself), who had examined the position and reported that traverses would be of no avail. Lieutenant-General Hood stated that he was also convinced that neither he nor General Polk could hold their lines for an hour against such an attack as they might certainly expect in the morning.

These generals both advocating to the commanding general to take the offensive and advance on the enemy from these lines, in reference to this proposed forward movement, General Johnston's attention was particularly called to the advantages of taking possession of the positions occupied by the batteries of the enemy on their extreme left, either by a special flank movement, or by prompt action at the time when the Confederate lines would be advanced. Lieutenant-General Polk expressed himself entirely willing and ready to co-operate with Lieutenant-General Hood to accomplish this object. After some moments of silence, General Johnston decided to withdraw the armies to the south of the Etowah. Soon after this, Lieutenant-General Hardee arrived. General Johnston informed him of the decision to cross the river, stating that Generals Polk and Hood had informed him that they could not hold their lines. Lieutenant-General Hood then restated the reasons, and said that Lieutenant-General Polk could not hold his line an hour, nor could he (Hood) hold his two hours, if attacked in the morning. Lieutenant-General Polk again explained the facts as they existed in reference

to his line, and stated his willingness to assume the offensive at any time,—then, or in the morning,—rather than to await the attack of the enemy in his (Polk's) present position. Upon these points Generals Polk and Hood entirely agreed, urging the offensive rather than await the enemy. Lieutenant-General Hardee made but few, if any, remarks that I heard. After a few moments General Johnston gave the orders for the armies to move to the south side of the Etowah.

Lieutenant-General Polk called to his assistant adjutant-general to issue the orders to his division commanders; this was about half-past ten or eleven o'clock. The orders to Major-General Loring (Army of Mississippi) were given to me to deliver; also one to him to order to report to me an officer with three hundred men, to occupy the exposed part of Major-General French's line as soon as his command was withdrawn. I was instructed by General Polk to place this detail along that part of the line, and keep up such fires as would indicate the presence of the withdrawn command, and to cut timber and drive stakes to indicate that works were being thrown up, and to remain there until daylight, and observe the movements of the enemy before leaving.

I went at once to General Loring's headquarters on the left of the Cassville road, saw that general, and delivered the orders; obtained the officer and detail, and arrived at General French's line about half-past eleven o'clock, and found that command ready to move; by twelve o'clock midnight they had withdrawn, and the detail was posted with a few men out in front.

It was a calm, clear, starlight night, and the position of the enemy upon the opposite ridge was clearly seen without their fires, which could be traced along their line, and the cutting of the timbers could be distinctly heard and located. In addition to the enemy's location upon the crest of the ridge, and passing through or just in front of the town of Cassville, and on the west, there were also strong indications of an advance line upon the plain nearer to the foot of the ridge occupied by us; and their chopping and driving rails was very distinct, and their voices could occasionally be heard.

The work of the detail was kept up during the night; at daylight I instructed the officer to assemble the men to the rear. During this time of preparing to leave the line, I closely observed the enemy and his positions through a very strong field-glass. I found that many of the enemy's batteries along the ridge had been advanced, and their principal and somewhat intrenched lines appeared to leave the ridge at a point about a mile east of Cassville, and passing to the south of west, full half a mile in front of lines of the previous evening. It appeared that the enemy had been aware of the movements of the Confederate armies, and their line advanced during the night was now vacated, and there were trains and artillery moving to the west upon the Kingston road, and solid bodies of infantry moving in the same direction.

The detail having been assembled, I placed them upon a by-road to Cassville station, on the main road to Cartersville. I instructed the officer to proceed to the south side of the Etowah River by way of the Cartersville bridge, and to report back to his division commanders. I passed on to cross the river at this same point, arriving there about half-past ten o'clock, and found the Army of the Mississippi nearly over to the south side of the river, which was accomplished by noon.

Very truly yours,
WALTER J. MORRIS,
Captain Engineer Corps, C. S. Army,
and Chief Engineer of the Army of Mississippi.

N. B. Enclosed herewith you will find a map[1] made by me from my notes taken at the time of reconnaissance.

Yours, etc.,
W. J. M.

1 See pt. xiii., plate lxii., No. vii., Maps "Official Records, War of Rebellion."

CHAPTER X.

BURIAL.

JUNE 14 TO JUNE 29, 1864.

Removal of General Polk's body to Atlanta.—Services at St. Luke's Church.—Arrival at Augusta.—Lying in state.—The funeral procession.—The burial service of the Church.—Committed to earth.—In memoriam.—A shepherd to the last.—Blood-stained memorials.—Testimony of comrades in arms.—President Davis's tribute.—Tributes from brothers in the Church.—Extract from Bishop Elliott's "Burial Address."—Under the shadow of the cross.

The body of General Polk was taken to the railway station during the afternoon for the purpose of being removed to Atlanta. On reaching that place it was received by a committee of the city, and placed within the chancel of St. Luke's. Clothed in Confederate uniform, it rested with a cross of white roses upon the breast, and by the coffin's side lay his sword. Throughout the morning the church was filled by those who came to pay the last tribute of affection. At noon an appropriate service, followed by an address, was conducted by the Rev. Dr. Quintard.

The military escort, having arrived at an early hour, was drawn up in front of the church, and, when the services were over, the body was placed in a field-ambulance, and was escorted to the station, followed by the dead general's personal staff, by Generals G. W. Smith, Wright, Ruggles, and Reynolds, Colonel Ewell, by other officers of the army, and by citizens generally.

The members of General Polk's staff and the committee representing the city of Atlanta were met at Augusta at dawn on the next morning by the rectors and vestry of the churches of the Atonement and St. Paul's, and the body was conveyed to St. Paul's, where a guard of honor received it.

After remaining two days at the church, the body was placed in the city hall, in charge of a guard.

Upon the day appointed, the 29th of June,—by a happy coincidence the feast of St. Peter the Apostle,—the military force of Augusta, consisting of one regiment of infantry, a battery of artillery, and a company of cavalry, was drawn up at the city hall. At half-past nine o'clock the case enclosing the body, draped in the Confederate flag and covered with wreaths of laurel and bay, was brought and placed upon the hearse by the guard of soldiers. The military escort, headed by its band, now began the solemn march; the colonel commanding the post, and the mayor of the city, immediately preceding the hearse. Wardens and vestrymen, representing St. Paul's Church, Augusta, St. John's, Savannah, and the Church of the Atonement, Augusta, marched on either side as pall-bearers. After them came the military family of General Polk, the clergy, officers of the army and navy, civil officers of the Confederate government, city authorities, members of the medical and legal professions, and other citizens. The procession moved to St. Paul's, through streets thronged with a multitude who had come to pay loving homage to the Christian soldier. All places of business were closed; no sound was in the air save the dirge of the band and the monotone of tolling bells. As the procession approached the church, which was free of all show except snow-white flowers in the font, the

bishops of Georgia, Mississippi, and Arkansas, in full canonical robes, with a company of surpliced priests, moved from the church down the avenue, which was flanked by the files of soldiers detailed as the guard of honor. Meeting the body at the gate, they turned and in fitting order preceded it into the church, the senior bishop (Bishop Elliott) repeating the words of the service for the burial of the dead: "I am the Resurrection and the Life, saith the Lord."

Approaching the chancel, the bishops entered within the rail, the attendant priests took place on either side without, and the body was placed at the foot of the steps. The anthem, "Lord, let me know mine end," was chanted to the solemn accompaniment of the organ. The Bishop of Arkansas read the lesson, the people united in singing "I would not live alway," and then the senior bishop, in the presence of the vast assemblage gathered within and around the church, delivered the "Burial Address," giving as his text, "The Master is come and calleth for thee." From beginning to end it was the outpouring of a great, noble spirit, which to this day stirs the hearts of all who heard it. It came as if bursting from the depths of a brother's soul, who, himself student, sage, orator, cast it in anguish before the people. No man had ever truer tribute, and if Leonidas Polk had done no more than win such love, such devotion, from so great, so grand a man as Stephen Elliott, he would not have lived in vain.

At the close of the address, the body, under military escort, preceded by the bishops and priests, was carried to the grave beneath the chancel window in rear of the church.[1] While it was being lowered into the grave the

[1] The chancel has recently been extended, so that now two graves — his own and his wife's — rest beneath the chancel rail.

senior bishop pronounced the sentences beginning, "Man that is born of woman," continuing with the form of commitment of the body to the ground, and the sentence, "I heard a voice from heaven." As he uttered the words, "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," earth was cast upon the body by the Bishop of Mississippi, the Bishop of Arkansas, and Lieutenant-General Longstreet, and then, amid the concluding words of the services of the church, the guns of the battery gave forth the last salute to the soldier-priest who on Pine Mountain "gave his body to that pleasant country's earth, and his pure soul unto his Captain, Christ, under whose colors he had fought so long."

IN MEMORIAM.

Nearing the end of his task, the writer is tempted to give space to recollections which here come crowding upon him; but as they would convey less interest than what was said by men who were chief actors in the scenes amid which the eventful life of Leonidas Polk was closed, he foregoes the wish and completes the work along the lines he has followed throughout. "The duty next me," his oft-repeated words, give the key to his life; and when we add the lack of care or thought of self, his acts in all of its emergencies arrange themselves in natural and logical order.

It was the chance of battle that the Church was never again to receive Leonidas Polk into its active service. But through all the labors, the alarms, the vigils, and the dangers that soldiers know; amid all the allurements of the "big wars that make ambition virtue," his firm spirit never wavered in its devotion to the Christian work, and his dearest wish was to return to that chosen field as the shepherd of a Christian flock.

Even in the busy campaign that cost his life, he found time to aid missionary work in the army; and, when the fatal shot cut him down, a blood-stained prayer-book was found next his heart, in one breast-pocket of his coat, and in the other, four copies of a little manual entitled "Balm for the Weary and Wounded." This tract had been written for use among the soldiers by the Rev. C. T. Quintard, now Bishop of Tennessee, whose ministration as chaplain in the Army of Tennessee, and whose devotion to every duty of his position, whether in battle, in camp, or on the march, endeared him to the thousands who had felt the inspiration and relief of his untiring care. The first four copies that came from the press were forwarded to General Polk, who upon the fly-leaves of three of them had written the names respectively of General J. E. Johnston, Lieutenant-General Hardee, and Lieutenant-General Hood, each "with the compliments of Lieutenant-General Leonidas Polk, June 12, 1864." Upon the fourth was his own name. All were saturated with his blood.

The day after his death these were forwarded, by Major Douglas West, of General Polk's staff, to the persons for whom they were intended. The following were the replies:

HEADQUARTERS, ARMY OF TENNESSEE, June 16, 1864.

My dear Major: I have just had the sad pleasure to receive the precious relic which you were so kind as to enclose to me yesterday. The autograph and noble blood which almost effaced it make it a souvenir truly precious, one which I shall cherish whilst the Almighty leaves me upon earth.

Accept, my dear major, my cordial thanks for the manner in which you have sent me what I regard as an inestimable bequest, and for your beautifully appropriate note accompanying it. Be assured that I shall remember both.

Very respectfully and truly, J. E. JOHNSTON.

MAJOR DOUGLAS WEST, *A. A.-G.*

IN THE FIELD, June 16, 1864.

My dear Sir: I have just received the tract you have been so kind as to send me. It is useless for me to say that I most thoroughly appreciate it. I had grown to love General Polk with my whole heart. He was so noble, so generous, and withal such an able soldier, that I soon found myself strongly attached to him. Very truly yours,

J. B. HOOD, *Lieutenant-General.*

TO MAJOR DOUGLAS WEST.

HEADQUARTERS, HARDEE'S CORPS, IN THE FIELD,
June 16, 1864.

My dear Sir: The little book which Lieutenant-General Polk, a short time before his death, addressed to me, and which is stained with his blood, was conveyed to me by yourself, and has been received with deep emotion. It shall be preserved as the last and most touching of many proofs of his esteem and regard. I, perhaps, more than any other of his brothers-in-arms, from my long and close relations with him as a soldier and Christian, have had opportunities to know and appreciate him as he was; and apart from my sympathy with the army and the country in their mourning for the fall of a great leader and a good man, I claim an exclusiveness of grief at the loss of the friend, which I am persuaded few can feel.

To yourself and the other members of the military household of your chief, I tender my heartfelt sympathies. For his bereaved widow and stricken family I can only ask the gentle dealing of a merciful Providence.

With high regard, I am very truly yours,

W. J. HARDEE, *Lieutenant-General.*

TO MAJOR DOUGLAS WEST, *A. A.-G.*

These letters tell as well as anything else the place which Leonidas Polk had won among his fellows in this war. But the following tributes to his worth round out the picture so completely that they cannot be omitted here.

A war correspondent, writing from the front, thus expresses the feeling of the army:

The history of this dismal period will present no name of more romantic interest. He was a great churchman—he was a great warrior. He laid aside his miter of bishop to take up the sword of the patriot. For three years, in every variety of command and under every circumstance, he has sustained the most unsullied reputation. As chief of a corps, he had no superior; as a separate departmental officer, he certainly possessed amplitude of comprehension, resource, and industry, to say nothing of the higher points. As a man, he was unrivaled for the graces of culture, native dignity, and high bearing. He was affable, self-possessed, and approachable. No man looked the hero more effectually. There was manliness in his eye and lip and gait; there was true nobility in his whole aspect. His soldiers—and, at one time or another, he had commanded all the troops of his army—were devoted to him. He was so dashing in battle, he was so wise and just in council, they could not but love him.

The private soldier here speaks his admiration and affection:[1]

General Leonidas Polk, our old leader whom we had followed all through that long war. . . . My pen and ability are inadequate to the task of doing his memory justice. Every private soldier loved him. Second to Stonewall Jackson, his loss was the greatest the South ever sustained. When I saw him there dead, I felt that I had lost a friend whom I had ever loved and respected, and that the South had lost one of her best and greatest generals.

His soldiers ever loved and honored him; they called him "Bishop Polk." "Bishop Polk" was ever a favorite with the army; and when any position was to be held, and it was known that "Bishop Polk" was there, we knew and felt that "all was well."

1 "History of Company H, Maury Grays, 1st Tennessee Regiment," by Samuel R. Watkins, p. 139.

Writing Bishop Elliott upon the occasion of the burial, the President of the Confederacy said:

> My relations with Bishop Polk were very near and affectionate when we were cadets together in the army, and the years which have passed since have only served to increase my regard for him. I feel much concern for the loss the army has sustained in his death, and I beg you, sir, to believe that I sorrow with his brothers in the ministry, who will now miss his manly counsel and coöperation.

And in his "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government" Jefferson Davis adds this final tribute to the many which had gone before:

> Our army, our country, and mankind at large sustained an irreparable loss in the death of that noble Christian and soldier, Lieutenant-General Polk. . . . Since the calamitous fall of General Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh, and of General Thomas J. Jackson at Chancellorsville, the country sustained no heavier blow than in the death of General Polk.[1]

Reaching now the question which more than all else personal would have appealed to Leonidas Polk, and which stands above every other in any estimate which may be made of his life, we ask, "What of the place which he had won and still held among his fellows in the Church?" Leaving aside the letters of Bishop Otey and others given in the eighth chapter of the first volume of this work, and taking from among the many letters bearing upon this subject three which come from men well qualified to speak, we have answers which should content even those who in their love for the Church saw but reproach in the militant act of this their brother.

[1] "Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government," vol. ii. p. 554.

BURLINGTON, VT., Feb. 16, 1867.

My dear Mrs. Polk: . . . I deeply regretted your dear husband's act in accepting a general's commission in the army, but I never doubted that he was governed by the purest conscientious desire to do what he regarded as his duty to God and to his country. The spirit of a Christian martyr was an element in his lofty character, and, while I could not have seen the case in the same light, I was well persuaded that he regarded his course as a sacrifice laid on the altar of truth, and went forth believing himself to be called to wield the sword of the Lord and of Gideon. To our beloved brethren in the South he has left a legacy of zeal and devotion never surpassed and rarely equaled in the whole range of human history. And the memory of his labors for the Church, and his sacrifices in the cause of independence, will be cherished in the hearts of thousands through future generations, after the false glory of worldly triumphs shall have passed away. Sincerely and truly yours,

JOHN HENRY HOPKINS.

[*Bishop of Vermont.*]

WADESBOROUGH, July 11, 1864.

My dear Mrs. Polk: . . . While our whole country mourns the loss of a man so useful and so eminent, I knew enough of him to know with what especial weight that loss falls upon his immediate family. His affectionate, cheerful, cordial nature, while it made him a universal favorite among his acquaintances, must have caused him to be especially beloved at home. I have often said that in our old House of Bishops, in which there were, certainly, many good and some great men, I knew of but one for whom there was so general affection entertained as for him whom you have lost, and that one was Bishop Cobbs. These two were objects of kindly feeling to all, and the reason, no doubt, was that they were themselves possessed by such kindly feelings. The world never will know what elements of strength were mixed with this loving nature in the character of Bishop Polk. But while the great man is mourned by his country, you, I am

sure, and all who were especially connected with him, rather delight to think of him as the good man who delighted to make others happy, and who was loved and honored by the good. . . . I remain, with great respect and regard,

Truly your friend,

THOMAS ATKINSON.
[*Bishop of North Carolina.*]

MRS. FRANCES A. POLK.

ALBEMARLE COUNTY, August 16, 1864.

My dear Mrs. Polk: I have delayed this letter, hoping to visit you in person, and to mingle the voice of the weeping over the ashes of the sainted dead. I bless the memory of your husband, that his life and his death have made me know more of the depth of my own nature,— the susceptibilities of my heart to reverence and admiration, to sympathy and grief. But this is no private grief: the world is poorer now that he has left it, and the Church lifts with a more trembling hand the veil which conceals from her sight the coming event of a dark and unknown future. Who is there left with the same power and influence to make her voice heard in the future councils of this government? Who with the same boldness and intrepidity to marshal her energies in the cause of Christian education? Who to gird the sword upon the thigh, and to give full vigor to her efforts for the extirpation of the errors which threaten her life? Oh! that his life could have been spared to hail the resurgent life of the Church, purified from the heresies of this creedless age, and his hopes had been realized, and his labors had received their appropriate reward. Come what may, he has fulfilled his task, he has borne his testimony, and our faith is permitted to behold him safely delivered from the malice of foes, clothed in the panoply reserved for those who in defense of the truth have "waxed valiant in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens," and witnessed in death to the power of the Christian faith.

May I be permitted, my honored friend, to proffer you my humble services in any way which may be most useful to

you and your beloved children. In such a fearful condition of things it will not be a violation of delicacy to say that if my means or credit can be made serviceable to you, it would add a new charm to my life, lately so bereft of value to myself and others.

With the warmest love of my family to you and yours,
I am most affectionately your friend and servant,
J. P. B. WILMER.[1]

Upon this subject, these letters, particularly the one from Bishop Wilmer of Louisiana, would seem sufficient answer; but if another is wanted, it will be found in that memorable address spoken over the dead body of Leonidas Polk by that bishop of the Church who knew him best, and who in all the Church work of his latter years stood closest to him. The time has not yet come when Stephen Elliott's oration can be given in its fullness; and until then we who loved Leonidas Polk must be content with what these pages have shown, for they at least carry him without favor or without fear through all the trials and triumphs of a life which his more than brother thus summed up in ending his sublime tribute to his memory:

"Time does not permit me to enter into any detail of his long and useful career as a bishop in the Church of God. That must be left for the biographer, who shall, in moments of leisure and of peace, gather up the threads of his most eventful life and weave them into a narrative which shall be strange as any fiction. Born to large hereditary estates, and increasing that fortune by intermarriage with the noble woman whom he had loved from boyhood, and who has cheerfully shared with him all his Christian pilgrimage, he has died leaving his family

[1] The successor of Bishop Polk in the diocese of Louisiana.

without any settled dwelling-place, wanderers from the pleasant homes which knew their childhood and their youth. Trained as a man of the world and a man of pleasure, he has lived a life of almost entire self-denial, a servant of servants, and has died a bloody death upon the battlefield. Destined in his own intention to mount to earthly glory by the sword and his own brave heart, he has mounted to heavenly glory by the crook of the shepherd and the humiliation of that heart. Full of heroic purposes as he leaped into the arena of life,—purposes always high and noble, even when unsanctified,—he has been made, by the overruling hand of God, to display that heroism in the fields which Christ his Master illustrated, teaching the ignorant, enlightening the blind, gathering together the lost sheep of Israel, comforting the bedside of sickness and affliction, watching long days and nights by the suffering slave. Oh, how many records has he left with God of heroic self-devotion of which the world knows nothing — records made up in silence and darkness, when no eye saw him save the eye of the Invisible! The world speaks of him now as a hero. He has always been a hero; and the bloody fields which have made him conspicuous are but the outburst of the spirit which has always distinguished him. Battles which he fought long since with himself and his kind; which he waged against the pomps and vanities of the world and the pride of life; which he contested with the pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday — were far more terrific than Belmont, or Shiloh, or Perryville. These required qualities which were natural to him; those, qualities which came from the grace of God and the spirit of Jesus. If, as the wise man says, 'Greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city,' then

was he truly great — for he had a spirit hard to rule, and Christ gave him the mastery over it.

"But his work is done, and now he rests from his labors! That brave heart is quiet in the grave; that faithful spirit has returned to its God. 'The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places. The mighty is fallen in the midst of the battle. I am distressed for thee, my brother — very pleasant hast thou been unto me.' And thou hast come to die at my very door, and to find thy burial amid my pleasant places. Welcome in death, as in life; welcome to thy grave as thou hast ever been to my home and to my heart. Thy dust shall repose under the shadow of the Church of Christ. These solemn groves shall guard thy rest; the glorious anthems of the City of God shall roll over thy grave a perpetual requiem."

THE END.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER X.

We present here in chronological order the following official tributes to Leonidas Polk.

General Stephen D. Lee, who succeeded to the command of the Department of Alabama, Missouri, and East Louisiana, issued the following order:

HEADQUARTERS, DEPARTMENT OF ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, AND EAST LOUISIANA,
MERIDIAN, MISS., June 18, 1864.

General Orders No. 81.

It is with profound sorrow that the major-general commanding announces to the troops of this department the death of their late commander, Lieutenant-General Leonidas Polk. On the 14th instant, in a skirmish near Marietta, Ga., this gallant warrior and Christian gentleman yielded up his life — a costly sacrifice to his country's liberties.

It would be superfluous here to recount the services of this lamented patriot. They are already before the world, and will form one of the brightest pages in the history of this memorable struggle. His high administrative talents, his distinguished gallantry upon many battlefields, his eminent virtues and kind and genial traits of character, have alike won the admiration and love of his countrymen.

From the toils and cares of this fitful existence, from the blood-red fields of battle, the Christian soldier has passed to that eternal rest which it was ever the aim of his life to secure. Let his memory ever be fresh amongst us, and let each strive to imitate his example and emulate his virtues.

As a mark of honor to the distinguished dead, the colors of

the troops of this command will be draped in mourning for the period of thirty days from the receipt of this order.

By command of Major-General S. D. Lee.

WILLIAM ELLIOTT,
Assistant Adjutant-General.

At the General Council of the Church of the Confederate States assembled at Augusta, Ga., the following was passed as a mark of respect to the late Bishops of Tennessee and Louisiana:

The joint committee to whom was referred the duty of preparing a suitable expression of the respect of this Council for the memory of the late Right Rev. James H. Otey, D.D., LL.D., Bishop of Tennessee, and the late Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D., Bishop of Louisiana, beg leave to recommend the adoption of the following resolutions:

Resolved, 1. That in the absence of these beloved fathers from the scenes of their earthly labors, at a time when their ardent devotion to the interests of Christ and his holy Church, their enlarged wisdom and ripe experience, would have rendered their counsel and coöperation especially valuable and important, we find cause for profound regret and sorrow, while we desire to bow in humble resignation to the afflictive dispensation of Divine Providence.

2. That, holding in deserved and affectionate remembrance their many virtues, their untiring energy, and their self-sacrificing efforts to maintain and defend the truth, we will study so to advance those great designs for the moral and religious culture of our dioceses, to which each of them had given so much time and thought, as will perpetuate the influence among us of their Christian character and elevated aims.

3. That copies of these resolutions be spread upon the journal of this body, and also communicated to the dioceses of Tennessee and Louisiana and to the families of the departed.

The Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church in North Carolina, desiring to testify their sympathy with the general sadness occasioned by the death of the Right Rev. Leonidas

Polk, D.D., Bishop of Louisiana, directed the following resolutions to be entered on its journals:

Resolved, That we have learned with profound regret the death of this distinguished prelate, and heartily sympathize with his family and diocese in their peculiar sorrows.

Resolved, That in this melancholy event the Church has lost a bishop to whose energy of purpose, and abundant labors, and rare administrative ability, and faithfulness in high office, the Churches of the Southwest have been largely indebted for their growth and prosperity, and whose genuine manliness and Christian care for his dependents, and simple piety, and devoted churchmanship, have earned our warm affection and admiration.

Resolved, That among the noble men who adorn the walks of public in the Confederacy we can point to very few whose purity of life, enlarged views, unselfish patriotism, and earnest following the calls of duty, entitle them to higher honor and a more lasting remembrance.

Resolved, That in the death of Bishop Polk the whole country has to lament the loss of a zealous advocate and promoter of education in its highest forms of culture and attainments, and to whose efforts in that cause our people had learned to look with confident expectation of its brilliant development and permanent success.

The diocese of Louisiana tendered the following tribute:

Whereas, on the 14th day of June, in the year of our Lord 1864, it pleased Almighty God, in his wise providence, to take out of this world the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D., chief pastor of the Church in Louisiana, the convention of this diocese, assembled in St. Paul's Church, New Orleans, with entire submission to the will of God under this trying dispensation, desire to put on record their profound sense of the great loss which the Church has sustained in the removal of one who, during a long period of uninterrupted labors in the episcopal office, (not only) had greatly endeared himself to the affections of the people whom he served (by the manifold

attractions of his personal character, and by the wisdom and vigor of his official administration), but was the means, under God, of laying broad and deep the foundation of the Church in Louisiana, and of extending its influence through all parts of the State.

In 1841, on application made by the diocese of Louisiana to the general convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States for some fit person to take the spiritual oversight of the Church in this State, the Right Rev. L. Polk, then missionary bishop of the Southwest, was selected by that venerable body to become diocesan of Louisiana.

In 1864 our Right Reverend Father in God was called away, by a sudden providence, from the responsibilities of earth to the solemnities of his Maker's presence.

During this interval the Church in Louisiana, struggling against many embarrassments, was greatly prospered; the number of her clergy multiplied from four resident ministers, who joined in the application to the general convention, to thirty-two officiating clergymen whose names appear on the records of the last diocesan convention in 1861. Organized parishes in union with the convention increased from three to forty. In still greater ratio the confirmed and communicants and households, establishing the Church thus more thoroughly in the confidence and respect of the community. The spiritual interest of the colored population was carefully attended to; many congregations were formed among the servants on the plantations, and numbers, brought under the wholesome discipline of the Church and instructed in the gospel, were annually confirmed and added to her communion. All which fruits of grace were witnesses as to the zeal and devotion of the parochial clergy, so also to the faithful overseeing of our late lamented bishop, whose counsels and encouragements were never wanting to sustain the parish ministers in these works of faith and labors of love.

Resolved, That in the appointment of the general convention in 1841 of the Right Rev. Leonidas Polk, D.D., then missionary bishop of the Southwest, to episcopal jurisdiction over the diocese of Louisiana, we recognize with gratitude to God the elevation over us of one eminently qualified in

mental endowments and Christian graces to administer the office of a bishop to the glory of God; and particularly adapted by personal and social characteristics to meet the peculiar wants of the Church in Louisiana.

Resolved, That this convention entertain a deep sense of the value of the services rendered to this diocese during the administration of Bishop Polk, and of his enlightened devotion to the spiritual interests of the flock over which the Holy Ghost had made him overseer. The episcopal addresses annually delivered before the conventions bear witness to the abundance of his labors; and while the growth of the Church, its general prosperity up to the date of the late unhappy war between the States, and the unbroken harmony which prevailed throughout the diocese, indicate the prudence and energy of his government.

Resolved, That this convention call to mind, with melancholy satisfaction, the many generous and noble traits of character which distinguished our late beloved Father in God in all his official intercourse with the members of this diocese, and which appeared conspicuously in all his private and social relations to the clergy and laity of the Church, who long cherish the memory of their departed bishop as an affectionate father, a gracious counselor, and a sympathizing friend.

Resolved, That in the plan devised for the creation of the University of the South, and in the measures adopted to secure the permanent endowment of that great enterprise for the religious and intellectual developments of the country, we recognize that broad and comprehensive Christian philanthropy, and that enlightened devotion to the best interests of the Church in the South, which so eminently characterized our late Father in God, in whose mind the noble project had its birth, and by whose untiring energies, in connection with others like-minded in southern dioceses, it had been well-nigh brought to a successful achievement when arrested by the unhappy convulsions of the country.

Resolved, That a copy of these resolutions, with a letter by the president of this convention, expressing the Christian sympathies of the Church in Louisiana, be addressed to the afflicted family of our deceased bishop.

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